# WESTERN ILLINOIS REGIONAL STUDIES

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# WESTERN ILLINOIS IN CHARLEVOIX'S HISTORY AND JOURNAL

**John Lee Allaman**

Many published historical writings on western Illinois relate Anglo-American experiences, but French predecessors are largely ignored. Yet Reuben Gold Thwaites believed that "He who seeks rich color, will doubtless find the French regime the most entertaining epoch of Mississippi Valley history."[1] New World discoveries were popular reading in France during the 1600s and 1700s, when so many explorers and travelers published narratives of their trips—such as: Louis Hennepin's *A Description of Louisiana* (French edition 1683), Louis Armand de Lom d'Arce Baron de Lahontan's *New Voyages to North America,* (1703), and Pierre F.X. de Charlevoix's *History and General Description of New France* and *Journal of a Voyage to North America* (French edition 1744). Theodore Calvin Pease felt that these writings, "may still have their use. . . [but] They were censored" and did not tell "the whole truth."[2] Yet Hennepin, Lahontan, and Charlevoix in their English translations gave the English and English colonials their first glimpse of the Mississippi River system. No matter how distorted, these French writings document the primitive landscape and early Indian residents of western Illinois.

Of the three authors, Charlevoix's perceptions of western Illinois were the most vivid and interpretive. His work was translated at the time English colonials were first starting to penetrate the Illinois River and Mississippi River systems. He is the only one who wrote more than a gazetteer of western Illinois. Charlevoix included references to western Illinois in his *History and General Description of New France* which utilized the methodology of the modern historian.[3]

Pierre Francois Xavier de Charlevoix was born October 29, 1682 in Saint-Quentin, France, the son of Francois de Charlevoix, deputy king's attorney, and Antoinette Forestier. On September 15, 1698, he entered the Society of Jesus in Paris. He entered College Louis-le-Grand in Paris in September 1700 where he studied philosophy until 1705. Charlevoix

was then sent to the Jesuit college of Quebec, New France, to teach grammar. In 1709, he returned to Paris where he studied theology and was finally ordained as a priest in 1713. Charlevoix then taught literature, composition, and philosophy at the Jesuit College of Orleans from 1713 to 1717. His first published book was a three-volume *Historire de l'establissement, des progres et de la decadence du Christianisme dans l'empire du Japan* (1715), an "expansion of an out-of-print work published in 1698." In 1718, he was sent to College Louis-le-Grand as an administrator and student chaplain.[4]

The French government in 1719 asked Charlevoix to recommend boundaries for Acadia (Nova Scotia) since it had been a sore point between France and England from the Treaty of Utrecht of 1713. His resulting recommendation claimed that England had rights only to the Nova Scotian peninsula and that the French could continue to trade with the Abenaki Indians. As Charlevoix was doing the study, the regent of France, Phillipe, Duc d'Orleans, asked him to investigate the existence and location of a western sea that reached "eastward into the area of present day Idaho and Montana." The thirty-seven-year-old Charlevoix left France in July 1720 and arrived at Quebec in September 1720. He stayed the winter and made preparations for his journey. The French government allowed him two canoes and eight voyagers for his expedition.

Charlevoix began his journey to North America in the Spring of 1721. He started down the Saint Lawrence River through the Great Lakes and down Lake Michigan to the Kankakee River. Via the Kankakee, he entered the Illinois River. Charlevoix followed the course of the Illinois until it met the Mississippi River. Then he paddled and sailed down the Mississippi to the Gulf of Mexico. After reaching the gulf, he went aboard a ship and reached France late in 1722.

Back in France, Charlevoix recommended to the French government that the western sea was near the source of the Missouri River. He also suggested setting up a mission among the Sioux. Finally recovered from his arduous journey, Charlevoix once more took up the mantle of a scholar.

In 1724, Charlevoix published his biography of Marie de l'Incarnation, a saintly nun of New France. The next years were spent in researching and writing his two-volume work, *Histoire de l'Isle Espagnole ou de S. Domingue* (1730-1731). In 1733 he was named to the editorial staff of the Jesuit cultural and scientific periodical *Journal de Trevoux*. He spent more than twenty years on the staff of the *Journal*.

Over twenty years after he made his epic journey through New France and Louisiana, Charlevoix in 1744 published his *Histoire et Description Generale de la Nouvelle France avec le Journal Historique d'un Voyage Fait par Ordre du Roi dans l'Amerique Septentrionale* in three-volume and six-volume editions. Then, in 1756, he published his

PIERRE F.X. DE CHARLEVOIX

three-volume *Histoire du Paraguay*. By 1758 Charlevoix began to have poor health that finally culminated in his death at La Fleche, France on February 1, 1761 at the age of seventy-nine.

Charlevoix was a popular historian of his day. The French intellectual Voltaire is said to have bought every one of his books. Charlevoix seems to have been a thoughtful and serious scholar. His *History and General Description of New France* is probably his best work since he actually visited the scenes described.

The *History and General Description of New France* and the *Journal of a Voyage to North America* are two interrelated parts. In actuality the *Journal* is a history of Charlevoix's journey through North America. He used his manuscript notes of the journey along with other materials to compose letters that were never sent to he Duchess de Lesdiguieres to make up the *Journal*.

When Charlevoix wrote his history he did not rely entirely on his notes and memory. He searched through many of the published French and Spanish writings on the New World. He supplemented that by studying "original documents preserved at the Depot de la Marine," that contained dispatches and letters of the Governors of New France. Charlevoix's writing goal was that "I shall omit nothing essential, but I shall avoid useless details." He also felt "neither maps nor plans should be spared. . . . Nothing is more necessary in history, of which geography and chronology are the two eyes—especially in treating of countries not sufficiently known."[6]

During his life and since then Charlevoix has had his critics. In his *History* and *Journal*, he made some mistakes and distortions but the majority of his narrative was fairly accurate. His writings on North America are still worthy of being read by people interested in an early contemporary non-English view of New France. Francis Parkman, even with his antipathy toward Jesuits, claimed that "Of all the early histories of French America it [Charlevoix's] is incomparably the best." Charlevoix's *Journal* also elicited great praise from Louise Phelps Kellogg, who said, "There is no other source which approaches his journal either for accuracy or discrimination; and none which gives so good a description of the posts, the routes, the missions, the tribes, and the conditions in the Mississippi Valley during the first quarter of the eighteenth century."[7]

Charlevoix's *History* contained numerous maps engraved by Nicolas Bellin from Charlevoix's notes and official French naval maps of North America. Bellin copied from previous maps but tried to improve them with Charlevoix's knowledge. The inclusion of these maps reflected Charlevoix's interest in illustrating unknown topography.[8]

The *History* and *Journal* have both been translated into English and printed in several editions. When the English colonials were just beginning to explore west of the Appalachian Mountains, the *Journal*

was translated and three editions published in 1761, 1763, and 1766. A new edition of the *Journal*, translated and edited by Louise Phelps Kellogg, was published in 1923. The *History* was not translated for more than a century. Between 1866 and 1872 John Gilmary Shea translated, edited, and published an English edition of the *History* that did not include the *Journal*, the lengthy essay on the origins of the American Indian, Nicolas Bellin's essay on geography, and an extensive botanical appendix. A reprint of the 1761 edition of the *Journal* was published in 1966. So the modern reader had easy access to Charlevoix's writing on New France. A new French-English edited translation of the 1744 edition is needed to include parts missing from previous English translations and rejoin the *Journal* with the *History*.[9]

More references to western Illinois appeared in the *Journal* than in the *History*. Charlevoix narrated the journeys of Marquette, Jolliet, and La Salle on the Illinois River and Mississippi River and briefly mentioned some of the French commanders of the forts on the Illinois River. Most of Charlevoix's western Illinois material centered around a description of the shores of the Illinois River and a lengthy essay on meeting two camps of the Peoria Band of the Illinois Indians.[10]

Charlevoix's descriptions of the French explorers of Illinois are brief but include some personal opinions. He said nothing against Father Jacques Marquette and Louis Jolliet but criticized Robert Cavelier Sieur de la Salle's failure to establish a strong French influence in the Mississippi River valley. Charlevoix felt La Salle "could not win love nor manage those whom he needed, and as soon as he possessed authority he exercised it with severity and hauteur." But he wrote these words about La Salle's successors: Henri de Tonti, Francois Dauphin de la Forest, and Pierre de Liette "long commanded in the country of the Illinois [Indians], and acquired a great ascendency over their minds" by "the firmness of the Chevalier de Tonti, and the sagacious conduct of the Sieurs de la Foret and Delietto. . . ."[11]

The French efforts to Christianize the Illinois Indians received strong praise from Charlevoix. He commented that the efforts of Tonti, La Forest, de Liette, and "Christianity, which they sincerely embraced. . . completely bound the Illinois nation to our interest." When Father James Gravier set up a mission near Starved Rock, Charlevoix claimed that before "long he gathered quite a numerous flock, and soon had the consolation of seeing among these Indians, hitherto so justly decried for their corrupt life, examples of virtue as striking as had been admired in the most flourishing missions in Canada, and the few survivors of that nation, formerly one of the most numerous on the continent, now profess Christianity."[12]

Charlevoix lauded the great changes in the Christian Illinois Indians by giving descriptions of their pagan lifestyle. He wrote in his *History* that "They have always been mild and docile enough; but they were

The Upper Midwest, from the "Carte de la Louisiane" in *Charlevoix's History and General Description of New France*, vol. VI, trans. by John Gilmary Shea (1872).

cowardly, treacherous, fickle, deceitful, thievish, brutal, destitute of faith or honor, selfish, addicted to gluttony and the most monstrous lust. . . ." In his *Journal*, Charlevoix described this monstrous lust of the men as being transvestism and homosexuality. He related, "that effeminacy and lubricity were carried to the greatest excess. . . ; men were seen to wear the dress of women without a blush, and to debase themselves so as to perform those occupations which are most peculiar to the sex, from whence followed a corruption of morals past all expression. . . ."[13]

These were Charlevoix's general conclusions about the French and Indian presence in western Illinois, while his *Journal* is a specific narration of his trip down the Illinois River. On September 27, 1721, Charlevoix reached Starved Rock and said, "*the Rock*. . . is the point of a very high terras, stretching the space of two hundred paces, and bending or winding with the course of the river which is very broad in this place." He found remains of Fort Saint Louis built by La Salle in 1682 but incorrectly identified them as an Indian fort. A village of the Illinois "stands at the foot of this rock [Starved Rock] in an island, which, together with several others, all of a wonderful fertility, divides the river in this place into two pretty large channels."[14]

In the afternoon, Charlevoix went ashore to the camp and met some Frenchmen who were trading with the Indians. He described "the chief of the village" as "a man of about forty years of age, well-made, of a mild temper, a good countenance, and very well spoken of by the French." He climbed up Starved Rock to get a view of the surrounding countryside and beheid "a spectacle which struck me with horror." Charlevoix had seen "the bodies of two Indians who had been burnt a few days before, and whom they had left according to custom, to be devoured by the birds. . . ." In his *Journal* he gave an extensive description of how the Illinos tortured and burned prisoners.[15]

Charlevoix stayed "in a cabbin in the middle of the village" overnight while "all my guides encamped on the other side of the river." The reason for this was that these Indians were not sufficiently Christianized. He explained, "The Illinois have the character of bold and dexterous thieves, which is the reason why I caused transport all the baggage to the other side of the river;" still "when we came to set out we found a musquet and some other trifles wanting, which we could never. . . recover." As they floated down the river, Charlevoix commented that the Illinois River was "both in breadth and deepness equal to most great rivers in Europe." He thought the Illinois area "a charming country."[16]

On October 3, 1721, Charlevoix and his companions "towards noon found ourselves at the entrance of Lake Pimiteouy; this is a widening of the river, which, for three leagues is a league in breadth." At the end of the lake, they found "on the right a second village of the Illinois, fifteen leagues distant from that of the rock." He believed this village was in a "delightful . . . situation" since "the lake and river swarm with fish, and

the banks of both with game." Charlevoix met four French Canadians at the village who informed him of hostile Foxes above and below the encampment.[17]

This news was reinforced by the fact that "thirty warriors of Pemiteouy" were out in the field and had captured one Fox a few days before. He had been burnt near the Illinois camp. The torture and execution of the prisoner had taken six hours. While Charlevoix was in the village, he met the "chief" whom he described as "a man of about forty years of age, of a good stature, a little thin, of a mild disposition, and extreme good sense" besides being "the best soldier of the nation." Charlevoix wrote a lengthy discourse about the crucifix the "chief" wore, not because he was a Christian but because he considered it a talisman of invulnerability.[18]

The "chief" was evidently very partial to Christianity and the French because he asked Charlevoix to stay in his camp till the trouble with the Foxes ceased. But Charlevoix refused since he had persuaded two of the French Canadians he had met in the village to accompany him down the river. Just before he left, the Illinois "chief" asked him to baptize his dying infant child. Charlevoix later said that "this child would never have entered into the kingdom of heaven" if he had not fortunately been present to perform the baptism.[19]

After leaving the Illinois encampment, Charlevoix continued down the river in constant fear of being killed. He described the Illinois River by saying, "the course of this river is westward inclining a little to the south, but with several windings or circuits." The river had "islands scattered up and down in it." The banks of the river were "but low in several places. During the spring the meadows on the right and left are for the most part under water, and afterwards are covered with very tall grass." He wrote the "river abounds every where with fish" and some buffalo were seen. Charelvoix mentioned passing the mouths of the Sangamon River and Macoupin Creek and the *"Machoutin"* marsh between the two waterways. He revealed that Macoupin came from the word *"Macopines. . .* a large kind of root," poison when eaten raw but after roasting it was edible.[20]

After passing along where "the river of the Illinois changes its course from west to south and by east," Charlevoix viewed the extremely high banks of the Mississippi River. On October 9, 1721, he entered the Mississippi River. He noticed on the right a large meadow with a small river that contained "a great quantity of copper." Charlevoix then continued on his journey south down the Mississippi.[21]

To ascertain further information besides his own observations, Charlevoix often interviewed Indians and French voyagers on his journey. His *Journal* contained a description of major rivers entering the Mississippi above the mouth of the Illinois. This material was probably collected from oral interviews and later research.

Charlevoix first mentioned "the river of *Buffaloes* [Salt River], which is at the distance of twenty leagues from the. . ." mouth of the Illinois River "and comes from the westward; a fine salt-pit has been discovered in its neighbourhood." The next river on the left was the Des Moines: "about fifty leagues above the river of *Buffaloes,* the river *Moingona* issues from the midst of an immense meadow, which swarms with Buffaloes and other wild beasts: at its entrance into the Mississippi, it is very shallow as well as narrow. . ." and it "is said to be two hundred and fifty leagues in length." Charlevoix reported above the Moingona River mouth that there were "two *rapids* or strong currents of a considerable length in the Mississippi, where passengers are obliged to unload and carry their pirogues. . . ." Another major river about sixty leagues from the Illinois was "the *Assenesipi* [Rock River], or river at the rock; because its mouth is directly opposite to a mountain placed in the river itself, where travellers affirm rock-chrystal is to be found."[22]

The writings of Charlevoix on western Illinois are limited by the fact that he only observed the terrain from his canoe on the Illinois River. Yet from him one learns of the diverse wildlife and beautiful landscape of the region and also the violent male-oriented lifestyle of the Illinois Indian. Regardless of whatever shortcomings his writing possesses, Charlevoix has valid claim to the title of being western Illinois' earliest historian.

## NOTES

[1]Reuben Gold Thwaites, "The Romance of Mississippi Valley History," in *Proceedings of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Constitution of Iowa*, ed. Benjamin F. Shambaugh (Iowa City: State Historical Society of Iowa, 1907), p. 122.

[2]Theodore C. Pease, "The French Regime in Illinois: A Challenge to Historical Scholarship," *Transactions of the Illinois State Historical Society* (Springfield: Illinois State Historical Society, 1936), p. 73.

[3]John A. Jakle, *Images of the Ohio Valley: A Historical Geography of Travel, 1740 to 1860* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1977), p. 163.

[4]The most useful sources of biographical information are: John Francis Bannon, "Pierre Francois-Xavier de Charlevoix, S.J.: A Brief Biography of the Author and the Translator," in P.[ierre] F.X. de Charlevoix, *History and General Description of New France* trans. John Gilmary Shea, 6 vols. (New York: John Gilmary Shea, 1866-1872; reprinted ed.; Chicago: Loyola Univ. Press, [1962], I (no pagination); *Dictionary of Canadian Biography,* s.v. "Charlevoix, Pierre-Francois-Xavier de," by David M. Hayne; *Dictionary of American Biography*, s.v. "Charlevoix Pierre Francois Xavier De," by L[ouise] P.[helps] K[ellog]; Charles

O'Neill, *Charlevoix's Louisiana: Selections from the History and the Journal* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1977) pp. xiii-xxx; and Pierre Margry, ed., *Memoires et Documents pour servir a l'histoire des origines francaises des pays d'outre-mer* 6 vols (Paris: Maisonneuve, 1879-1888), VI, 521-80.

[5]"Forward" in P.[ierre] de Charlevoix, *Journal of a Voyage to North America*, 2 vols. (London: R. and J. Dodsley, 1761; reprint ed.; New York and Ann Arbor: Readex Microprint and University Microfilms, 1966), I (no pagination).

[6]Charlevoix, *History*, I, 67-96, 6-7.

[7]Raymond E. Hauser, "The Illinois Indian Tribe: From Autonomy and Self-Sufficiency to Dependency and Depopulation," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 69 (1976), 132; [Francis Parkman], review of *History and General Description of New France* by P.[ierre] F.X. de Charlevoix, translator John Gilmary Shea, in *Atlantic Monthly*, April 1872, p. 499; and Pierre Francois Xavier de Charlevoix, *Journal of a Voyage to North America*, trans. and ed. Louise Phelps Kellogg, 2 vols. (Chicago: The Caxton Club, 1923), I, xxv-xxvi.

[8]O'Neill, pp. xxiv-xxv; and Melburn D. Thurman, "Cartography of the Illinois Country: An Analysis of Middle Mississippi Maps Drawn During the British Regime," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 75 (1982), 277-78.

[9]Jakle, p. 163.

[10]Hauser, 129-30; and Wayne C. Temple, *Indian Villages of the Illinois Country: Historic Tribes*, with an Introduction by Fred Eggan, rev. ed. (Springfield: Illinois State Museum, 1966), p. 39.

[11]Clarence Walworth Alvord, *The Illinois Country, 1673-1818, The Centennial History of Illinois*, vol. I (Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co., 1922; reprint ed., Chicago: Loyola Univ. Press, 1965), pp. 80-81, Charlevoix, *History*, III, 197, V, 131; and Hauser, 130-31, note 13.

[12]Charlevoix, *History*, V, 131-33.

[13]Ibid., V. 130; Charlevoix, *Journal* (1761), II, 80; [Pierre de Liette], "Memoir of De Gannes Concerning the Illinois Country," in *The French Foundations, 1680-1693*, eds. Theodore Calvin Pease and Raymond C. Werner, *Collections of the Illinois State Historical Library*, vol. XXIII (Springfield: Illinois State Historical Library, 1934), p. 329; Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents: Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in New France, 1610-1791*, 129, 73 vols. (Cleveland: Burrows Bros. Company, 1896-1901), LXIX, 129; U.S., Smithsonian Institution, *Handbook of North American Indians*, gen. ed. William C. Sturtevant, 20 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1978-), XV, 675; and John E. Hallwas, *Western Illinois Heritage* (Macomb, Illinois: Illinois Heritage Press, 1983), p. 10.

[14]Charlevoix, *Journal*, (1761), II, 200; Jane F. Babson, "The Architecture of Early Illinois Forts," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 61 (1968), 15-16, and Alvord, p. 88.

[15]Charlevoix, *Journal*, (1761), II, 200-04

[16]Ibid., II, 204-05.

[17]Ibid., II, 205; and Temple, pp. 39, 87-88.

[18]Charlevoix, *Journal*, (1761), II, 206-09

[19]Ibid., II, 207, 211-12.

[20]Ibid., II, 216-17; Virgil J. Vogel, *Indian Place Names in Illinois* (Springfield: Illinois State Historical Library, 1963), pp. 58, 123-25; Sara Jones Tucker comp., *Indian Villages of the Illinois Country: Atlas* (Springfield: Illinois State Museum, 1942), plates XXIV, XL, XLVI; Wayne C. Temple, comp., *Indian Villages of the Illinois Country: Atlas Supplement* (Springfield: Illinois State Museum, 1975), plates LXXXI, LXXXVI; and W. Raymond Wood, comp., *An Atlas of Early Maps of the American Midwest* (Springfield: Illinois State Museum, 1983), plate 11B.

[21]Charlevoix, *Journal*, (1761), II, 217-18.

[22]Ibid., II, 225-26; Vogel, p. 120; U.S., Department of Defense, Army *A History of the Rock Island District Corps of Engineers 1866-1975*, by Ronald Tweet (Rock Island, Illinois: U.S. Army Engineer District, Rock Island, 1975), pp. 34-44; U.S., Department of Defense, Navy, *The American Revolution 1775-1783. An Atlas of 18th Century Maps and Charts*, compiled by W. Bart Greenwood (Washington, D.C.: Naval History Division, 1972), map 2; Tucker, plates XV, XVII, XXIX, XXXIIB, XL; Temple, *Atlas Supplement*, plates LXVII, LXX, LXXII, LXXX, LXXXIII; and Wood, plates 10, 11B and 13B.

# "OLD DICK" RICHARDSON, THE OTHER SENATOR FROM QUINCY

**Robert P. Howard**

The Illinois Military Bounty Tract, that bountiful triangle between the Illinois and Mississippi rivers, has always been politically deprived. Only seventeen men from that region have been elected to state offices or appointed to fill vacances in them. Voters in southern and central Illinois, and from the Chicago area, have been much more successful in sending their favorite sons to Springfield.

The only governor from west of the Illinois River was the venerable John Wood, the founder of Quincy. He was elected lieutenant governor and then filled the chief executive's office for ten quiet months in 1860.

Five United States senators resided in the Military Tract during parts of their careers. In the era of the first World War, Lawrence Y. Sherman, who looked like Lincoln, went to the Senate after he changed his address from Macomb to Springfield. Before the Civil War, Richard M. Young and Stephen A. Douglas were carpetbaggers in the Military Tract, where they set up temporary residence after being elevated to the Illinois Supreme Court and assigned the Quincy district. Both left at the first opportunity. As judge and congressman, Douglas lived at Quincy off and on for six years. As soon as he was elected senator, he moved to Chicago. Of the five senators, only Orville Hickman Browning and William Alexander Richardson returned to western Illinois when they retired from politics.[1]

Of the public men who permanently resided in the Military Tract, the best remembered is Orville H. Browning, whose *Diary* was a major bequest to historians. As an attorney, Whig legislator, platform drafter at the first Republican state convention, associate of Lincoln, successor of Douglas in the senate and Secretary of the Interior under Andrew Johnson, Browning served in high offices with intelligence and honor. He has the respect of the generations that followed.[2]

Until the Civil War, however, "Old Dick" Richardson was more important than Browning, whom he defeated twice in Congressional elections. He entered politics as a Jacksonian Democrat and became the right-hand man of Douglas in Illinois, in Congress and in Democratic national conventions. In the watershed year of 1856 the tall and robust Richardson was the Little

Giant's personal but unsuccessful candidate both for speaker of the national House of Representatives and for Governor of Illinois. In an anticlimax, during the last two years of the Civil War, he reached the United States Senate as Browning's replacement. There he faded into obscurity and from memory.

Browning and Richardson were opposites in more ways than their political affiliations and philosophies. Browning is remembered as a socially-polished lawyer who dressed well and had courtly manners. Not so his friend and rival. In his recent biography of Douglas, Robert W. Johannsen described Richardson as "tall, slightly stooped and coarse featured."[3] Maurice Baxter, biographer of Browning, was by no means flattering. He wrote: "Lacking polished manners and a well-informed mind, Richardson was a spirited and loyal worker. He laughed, drank, swore and fought with relish. His political strength was considerable, and he was seldom defeated in his many bids for public office."[4]

There is a contemporary account of Richardson by Gustave Koerner, who turned from the Democractic to the Republican party in 1856. In telling of a Richardson campaign speech at Belleville, Koerner wrote: "He was a big, powerful man, very uncouth in his manners but a man of great energy and force of will, being Douglas' lieutenant in the lower House of Congress. He had sense and fluency, but his language was anything but choice. I don't think he pleased the Belleville people very much."[5] However, the less critical tend to concur with Shelby M. Cullom's judgment that Richardson was "a man of considerable ability."[6]

That Douglas and Richardson could be political partners is not surprising. The Little Giant was a vital and complex person who, when out of the spotlight, enjoyed carousing with the common man. He and "Old Dick" had much in common.

At the same time Richardson and the dignified Browning were social friends. In both Quincy and Washington, the *Diary* reveals, the political rivals did personal favors for each other. More than that, they and their wives frequently had tea or dinner at each other's homes.

Both young men were well equipped for professional careers in a frontier environment when they made separate journeys from Kentucky to Illinois in 1831. Richardson was twenty and Browning five years older. Both had received college educations and been licensed to practice law. Browning went directly to Quincy while Richardson stopped at Shelbyville. Lincoln had been in Illinois a year. Douglas came two years later.

While he read law, Richardson stayed in Shelbyville a year and a half. Why he left is uncertain. In Palmer's *Bench and Bar* there is a hint that he had a fist fight with a doctor who possibly was part of the establishment.[7] The official reason, given in a biography presumably written by a family member, was that the young man had been impressed with the country around Rushville when he rode across the Military Tract during thirty-six days of mounted service in the Black Hawk War. He had enlisted in the

Shelbyville company which camped three miles east of Rushville on its first night out of Beardstown, nine miles away. Showing a talent for leadership, young Richardson was made assistant quartermaster sergeant. Like Lincoln, he returned home without seeing action.[8]

The frontier line of settlement had passed out of the Military Tract before Richardson, in November, 1834, began fifteen years of residence at Rushville, an important settlement in an area where litigation involving land titles would provide lawyers with a financial bonanza. The town was growing steadily, and some 400 persons lived in log cabins around five little stores. It had a wool carding factory and a few other primitive industries.[9] The Military Tract's first newspaper had just been established in Peoria. Rushville and Quincy would have their own papers the next year.

The young man did not remain a stranger in western Illinois. Sixteen months after arrival he was secretary of a citizen's committee and his name was printed in the *Sangamo Journal* in far-away Springfield.[10] The next year he was fined three dollars for contempt of court. The legislature by a large majority elected him state's attorney of the Fifth Judicial District. The defeated Whig candidate was Browning. At Vandalia no one kept a roster of the self-appointed lobbyists who showed up there during legislative sessions, but it is probable that Richardson was there part of the time. Because of his political interests and instincts, it would have been difficult to keep him away. When the young prosecuting attorney reached Quincy, the metropolis of the Military Tract, the court house was a log structure.

When the Tenth General Assembly convened at Vandalia in late 1836, Richardson took the oath of office as state representative and soon acquired the nickname of "Old Dick." It was bestowed by a senator who said he had never known a clever fellow whose name was not Dick.[11] Douglas and Lincoln also were house members and Browning was a senator. On the key issue of the historic session, Richardson was the only one of the quartet who was on the right side. He voted against the disastrous internal improvements scheme that saddled the state with a mammoth debt.[51] Like Lincoln and Browning, he voted to relocate the seat of government at Springfield. Douglas was loyal to Jacksonville, his home at the time.

Richardson's political career was intermittent and raises a question about the fervor of his ambition to hold public office. After his house term, he served four years as state senator and then retired to his law practice. Two years later, in 1844, the Whig opposition entered a strong candidate for state representative and the Democrats called for their best man to save the day. "Old Dick" returned to politics, proved again that he could win a tough fight, and was rewarded by being made speaker of the House. Then he retired again. John Moses, one of the better historians of that era, praised his record as Speaker.[13]

He was a superior politician–genial, magnetic, possessed of a fluent tongue and commanding voice. His understanding of human nature was

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invaluable in campaigning and in courtrooms, but he was not a top-flight lawyer. The Schuyler County history went into considerable detail in a biographical sketch:

> As a lawyer, he was not especially brilliant, rather the opposite, yet withal sound and practical. His strong points were a consummate knowledge of human nature, skill in selecting a jury favorable to him or his client, and his forcible manner of presenting a case. He was large, well-formed, and possessed of much personal magnetism. His was rather an indolent mind. Consequently his law points and citations were not generally voluminous nor the statutes exhausted in fortifying his case. Outside the courtroom he was a most genial companion of easy, pleasant manner and fine social qualities whom everybody knew intimately and everybody liked.[14]

Richardson was an early arrival in an area where lawyers were in demand. As a result, his practice soon extended beyond Schuyler County. When five anti-Mormons were indicted at Carthage for the Joseph Smith murder, the four defense attorneys included Browning, the legal student, and Richardson, the manipulator.[15]

He entered the Mexican War as the captain of a volunteer company he had recruited, and on the Buena Vista battlefield he was promoted to major in the command changes that followed the death of Colonel John J. Hardin. While still in Mexico he was nominated for Congress. Douglas, who had pioneered in organizing and unifying his party, had been elected United States senator. He wanted to be succeeded by a man who could be depended upon to keep the district safely Democratic and who also would be of help in the political battles at Washington. For that role, his personal choice was Richardson, who deserved the advancement.[16] As a Douglas man, he had no difficulty winning election as Congressman five times before he resigned in 1856.

In the pattern of settlement, and consequently in early political behavior, the Military Tract resembled the rest of Illinois. The first arrivals were from the South, or at least had been exposed to the southern culture and its dependence upon the labor of Negro slaves. The majority considered themselves Democrats if for no other reason than that they wanted to belong to the party of Andrew Jackson, the political patron saint of the common man and the enemy of bankers. Richardson, who was both a Kentuckian and a Jacksonian, represented a congressional district that was centered on the Military Tract's southern counties and extended only into the fringes of the area in which the Whigs, and later Anti-Nebraska Democrats and Republicans, were successively strong. The political boundary was that Democrats polled majorities in Peoria, Fulton, McDonough, Hancock and all counties to the south. The opposition consistently turned out majorities in Knox, Warren and Henderson counties and others to the north. That

demarcation held before and during the campaigns when Lincoln was a presidential candidate.

Early in his congressional career, Richardson moved his family to Quincy, which had been the home of his wife. There he lived, when he was not in Washington, until he died in 1875. Like Douglas, he invested in Chicago real estate, and might have become wealthy if he had stayed in Illinois and supervised his holdings. That could have been one reason why he kept announcing that he would quit after one more term.[17]

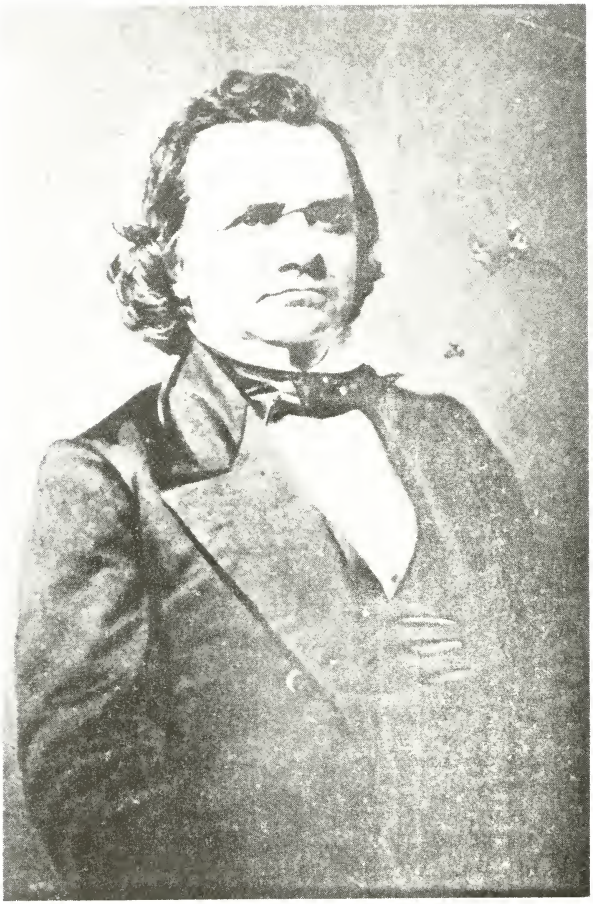
In Congress he was not only a Douglas man; he was one of Douglas' best men. He effectively supported bills for preemption and for the Illinois Central Railroad's land grant. He backed the Compromise of 1850, which supposedly settled forever the question of how far slavery could extend into the western territories. He became chairman of the House Democratic Caucus and of the Committee on Territories, which was the same post Douglas held in the Senate.

Unquestioning his loyalty, Richardson in 1854 was the hard-working House leader for the controversial Kansas-Nebraska bill that repealed the limits on the spread of slavery set in the Compromise of 1850. The bill was Douglas' big mistake; in the storm that spread across the North, Richardson also suffered.[18]

For one thing, he was not elected Speaker of the House at the next session of Congress, which would have made Douglas even more influential. "Old Dick" was the caucus choice of a party that in the 1854 election had been reduced to minority status as a result of the uproar over Kansas.[19] Meanwhile his aggressive stand on the slavery expansion issue had made him personally unpopular with the men from the North who, in the meantime, could not agree upon their own candidate for speaker. In a deadlock that lasted for weeks, not one of the northerners would end the stalemate by voting for Richardson. After 122 ballots, he withdrew as a candidate in early 1856. The later election of a Massachusetts man was the first significant victory for what became the Republican party.

That summer Richardson resigned his Congressional seat, but the ambitious Douglas would not permit him to retire from Illinois politics. If the Democratic Party was to maintain its supremacy, the choice of a successor to Governor Joel A. Matteson was of vital importance. An unusually strong candidate was needed to face a coalition of Whigs, Anti-Nebraska Democrats, Know-Nothings and abolitionists. During the Democratic state convention, word reached the delegates that Douglas wanted the nomination to go to Richardson.[20]

Under unusual circumstances, "Old Dick" opened his gubernatorial campaign with a speech in the Quincy courthouse. According to the *Quincy Herald*, the candidate spoke for two hours and received much applause from a big crowd. However, the Democratic paper was silent about the contents of his speech. "We were unable to gain an entrance into the room," it reported. "We cannot give the details, but we can say that no



STEPHEN A. DOUGLAS

speech ever delivered in our city gave better satisfaction or was received with better applause."[21] It is not believeable that Austin Brooks, the violent-tongued editor, could not be squeezed into the courtroom or could not determine later what were the main points of the main speech. It is more likely that the party leadership regarded Richardson as controversial and hesitated to have his remarks reprinted by other Democratic organs. The campaign-opener had a parallel two months earlier when Abraham Lincoln gave a "lost speech" at the first Republican state convention.

In western Illinois, the intemperate *Quincy Herald* preached that a man should be a Democrat, a Douglas-Richardson supporter and a believer that Negroes are inferior. It was the party mouthpiece in the Military Tract, part of a journalistic network that took its signals from the *Chicago Times* and the *Illinois State Register* at Springfield. Brooks wrote that the political issue was "the white man against the Nigger." To him "abolitionists, black republicans and negro worshippers" were lumped together as grade A undesirables.[22]

The rival *Quincy Whig*, a smaller and less excitable publication, largely ignored Richardson while it contended that the chief issue was the efforts of slavery advocates to set up a government in Kansas.

The *Herald* repeatedly insisted that its home-town candidate was a certain winner but it never gave even a brief outline of what Richardson was saying as he stumped Illinois. It seemed to assume that it was unnecessary to state his qualifications. It printed the texts of some Douglas speeches and it once carried a speech by Joshua Giddings, whom it identified as the "king of the abolitionists" in Ohio. Abolitionism was a dirty word in the *Herald's* circulation territory.

Meanwhile the paper made repeated charges, originally developed by the *Chicago Times*, that William H. Bissell, a former Democratic congressman who was the Republican nominee for governor, had falsified his congressional expense accounts, had neglected the interest of his constituents in acting as a lobbyist for the Illinois Central railroad, and was ineligible constitutionally to become Governor of Illinois because he had accepted a challenge by Senator Jefferson Davis of Mississippi to fight a duel. At least some of those matters were legitimate campaign issues, but the paper continued with attacks that were both sensational and ethically questionable. It informed its readers that Bissell "did not deny" that he had been a slaveholder and that he had gone to Chicago in an effort to recover a fugutive slave. Those allegations were preposterous, in view of Bissell's Yankee nativity and long-time disagreements with southern Democrats. The *Herald*, which circulated among men who had chased the Mormons out of Nauvoo, also contended that Bissell was a supporter of polygamy. That was based on a vote to seat a delegate from Utah, the new home of the Mormons.

On election day, antislavery sentiment turned the tide. Richardson carried the southern counties of the Military Tract but lost the governorship

by 4,787 votes. The long-range significance of Bissell's election was that the Republican victory in Illinois helped make Lincoln an authentic presidential candidate four years later.

Richardson's status as a right-hand man of Douglas was confirmed at three Democratic national conventions, all the scenes of long deadlocks that ended with the denial to the Little Giant of his party's presidential nomination. At Baltimore in 1852, when Douglas was not yet forty years old, Richardson made the announcement, after a caucus, that the Illinois delegation joined a stampede to Franklin K. Pierce. At Cincinnati in 1856, while Douglas stayed at Washington, the center of attention was his chief lieutenant and floor manager. One of Richardson's qualifications was that his voice could be heard throughout the hall, but he also was the strategist for the Douglas forces. After a satisfactory platform had been adopted, Douglas sent a letter of withdrawal to his man-on-the-scene. Richardson nevertheless put the senator's name in nomination. When a deadlock persisted, in an emotional scene amid great excitement, he read the letter of withdrawal that insured the election of James Buchanan.

At Charleston in 1860, where eight southern states seceded rather than permit the nomination of Douglas, Richardson was a conspicuous figure during fifty-seven inconclusive ballots. At a Baltimore convention later in the year, Douglas finally won a nomination from one wing of his divided party.

When Buchanan became president in 1857, Douglas did his best to get a cabinet post for his man Richardson. After several months "Old Dick" rejected and then accepted appointment as Governor of Nebraska Territory. He served approximately a year before he resigned because the senator and the president were quarreling. In 1858 and 1860 he made campaign speeches for Douglas.

Richardson came out of retirement in 1860, when Douglas' presidential campaign needed local reinforcement. He ran for his old congressional seat in the Military Tract and again won. Then he was left without a leader when Douglas died at the beginning of the Civil War. For a time "Old Dick" remembered that the Little Giant had supported Lincoln in the secession crisis and had said that in wartime there can be patriots and traitors but no neutrals.

Had Douglas lived to advise him, Richardson might have accepted the brigadier generalship Lincoln offered him. Mexican War officers were in demand for Union commands and under an informal patronage system state officials sent to the White House their recommendations for brigadier general of volunteers. Browning's *Diary* tells that on July 28, 1861, the members of the Illinois congressional delegation met in Senator Lyman Trumbull's room to agree upon seven names. Illinois was entitled to nine, but John Pope and Stephen A. Hurlbut had already been appointed. On Browning's list of the men whose recommendations were sent to President Lincoln, Richardson was third behind Ulysses S. Grant and John A. McClernand. The others were Eleazer A. Paine, Benjamin M. Prentiss, John

M. Palmer and Leonard F. Ross. Browning did not mention whether Richardson had attended the bipartisan meeting.[23]

A detailed and sympathetic biographical sketch included in an Adams County history says that, back in Illinois, Richardson received an appointment as brigadier general dated September 3, 1861. He took no action until Mary 1, 1862, when he wrote to President Lincoln: "Some time since, without solicitation on my part, you did me the honor to tender me the appointment of brigadier general in the army. I signified then my determination to accept as soon as my health would permit. Not having accepted the position before, I deem it improper to do so now."[24] No other information about the health of Richardson has been located. Many army officers, regulars and volunteers alike, were sensitive about seniority of rank.

Predominantly Richardson was a partisan, uncomfortable with the thought that his wartime allegiance should go to a man who was not a Democrat. He considered himself a loyalist, but he did not think force could be used constitutionally to prevent secession. The influence of the *Quincy Herald* was still strong, in the aftermath of the Emancipation Proclamation, when Richardson in a speech on the House floor denounced abolitionism and the concept of Negro equality.[25] His conservative views never adjusted to the emergencies of wartime.

He became the Illinois leader of the Peace Democrats or Copperheads who thrived during the mid-years of the Civil War. He was the dominating figure at Democratic home front mass meetings and, had there been an election of state officials in 1862, undoubtedly he would have became governor. Instead, his followers elected him to the Senate to serve the last third of the Douglas term.[26]

In the Senate, the man who had been sword-bearer for Douglas was an ineffective opponent of the Lincoln administration. Before Appomattox, he believed that war could not be won. With peace, he was scorned by the Grand Army of the Republic members who had proven that it could be. They converted most of the Military Tract to Republicanism.

Back in Quincy to stay, Richardson looked after his law practice. For a time he took over management of the *Quincy Herald*, which was one of the financial casualties of the war. He held office only one more time. In a courthouse relocation fight, to help his Quincy neighbors, he accepted appointment to the Adams County board of supervisors.

Unlike Browning, "Old Dick" Richardson never qualified as a statesman. He was a politician who reached high places when he stood at the side of Douglas but was a failure when his turn came for a leadership role. But in the century that has passed since his death, with the possible exception of Lawrence Y. Sherman, no one from the triangle between the Illinois and Mississippi rivers has advanced as far in Illinois and national politics as the other senator from Quincy.

## NOTES

[1]Richardson's career deserves further research. His political prominence is documented by Robert W. Johannsen in *Stephen A Douglas* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1973) and in "Douglas at Charleston," *Politics and the Crisis of 1860,* ed. Norman A. Graebner (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1961). Inadequate is Robert D. Holt, "The Political Career of William A. Richardson," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society,* 26 (1933), 222-67. Informative biographical sketches are found in *Combined History of Schuyler and Brown Counties* (Philadelphia: W.R. Brink, 1882) and William H. Collins and Cicero F. Perry, *Past and Present of the City of Quincy and Adams County,* (Chicago: S.J. Clarke, 1905), pp. 402-08.

[2]Maurice G. Baxter, *Orville H. Browning, Lincoln's Friend and Critic* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1957) and Theordore Calvin Pease and James G. Randall, *The Diary of Orville Hickman Browning,* 2 vols. (Springfield: Illinois State Historical Library, 1925).

[3]Johannsen, p. 517.

[4]Baxter, pp. 69-70.

[5]*Memoirs of Gustave Koerner,* (Cedar Rapids: The Torch Press, 1909), II, 32.

[6]*Fifty Years of Public Service* (Chicago: A.C. McClurg, 1911), p. 52.

[7]John M. Palmer, *The Bench and Bar of Illinois,* (Chicago: Lewis Pub. Co., 1899), I, 458.

[8]Ellen M. Whitney, ed., *The Black Hawk War, 1831-32,* vol. 1, *Illinois Volunteers,* (Springfield: Illinois State Historical Library, 1970), pp. 93, 209, 213.

[9]William V. Pooley, *The Settlement of Illinois from 1830 to 1850* (Madison, Wis., 1908), chap. 6.

[10]Collins and Perry, 402.

[12]*Journal, House of Representatives,* February 28, 1837.

[13]John Moses, *Illinois Historical and Statistcal* (Chicago: Fergus, 1889), I, 459.

[14]*Combined History of Schuyler and Brown Counties,* p. 149.

[15]Dallin H. Oaks and Marvin S. Hill, *Carthage Conspiracy* (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1975), pp. 79, 82-83.

[16]Johannsen, p. 189.

[17]Richardson's career can be traced in Collins and Perry, and in Johannsen, to which the present discussion is indebted. See also Moses, and Alexander Davidson and Bernard Stuve, *Complete History of Illinois* (Springfield: D.L. Phillips, 1874).

[18]Moses, pp. 573-75.

[19]Johannsen, p. 488.

[20]Moses, p. 669.

[21]*Quincy Herald,* 12 July 1856.

[22]*Quincy Herald,* 12 May 1856.

[23]Pease and Randall, *Browning Diary,* I, 486-88.

[24]Collins and Perry, p. 406.

[25]*Quincy Herald*, 19 May 1862.

[26]Moses, II, 671.

# JOHN HAY AND THE WESTERN SCHOOL OF LITERATURE

George Monteiro

> "Apparently," says the [New York] *Tribune,* "American literature must be grotesque in humour and fantastic in form, or it will not be accepted in England as having the racy virtues of the soil." This is perfectly true. American literature when it lacks these qualities often reads like nothing but imitation English literature, and we can hardly be expected to grow enthusiastic over that. No one denies the value of Col. Hay's Monumental work of Lincoln, but weighed against "Little Breeches" and "Jim Bludso" and "Tilmon Joy" and "The Mystery of Gilgal" it kicks the beam.
>
> - *Academy* (3 April 1897, p. 379).

In December of 1870, two months after joining the staff of the *New York Tribune*, John Hay wrote an editorial calling attention to the unacknowledged antecedents of what he called the "Western School" of American literature newly arisen in the poems and stories of Bret Harte and Mark Twain. The importance of Hay's unsigned piece lay in his identification of the "Western" literary sources, not only of Harte and Twain, but of his own nascent "Pike County Ballads"—one of which, "Little Breeches," had recently appeared in the *Tribune*, and would be followed a few weeks later by "Jim Bludso."[1] As such, he was declaring early on that his work was independent of Harte's yet, like Harte's (and Mark Twain's and William Dean Howells'), dependent on the work of common predecessors.

The true source of the literature now coming from "the further side of the Alleghanies" (including his own), Hay finds to be "Lieut. Derby, whose Phoenixiana are even yet unrivalled in broad and genial absurdity" and "the spirit of grotesque," and Dr. J.W. Palmer. George Horatio Derby (1823-1861), publishing under the pseudonym of "John Phoenix," was responsible for *Phoenixiana; or Sketches and Burlesques* (1865). Dr. John Williamson Palmer (1825-1906), who had been "the first appointed city-physician of San Francisco," wrote "a series of romantic and characteristic stories of life among the adventurers, miners and gamblers of California in 1849."[2] In 1859 he collected these skteches (along with his sketches of life in India, first published in the *Atlantic Monthly*) in a book: *The Old and the*

*New, or California and India in Romantic Aspects*. Hay's editorial notions anticipate by a quarter of a century the argument in the *Literary Digest* for Dr. Palmer's primacy in the treatment of California as a literary theme. "The Western School" is taken from the editorial page of the *New York Tribune* for December 27, 1870 (page 4). Hay acknowledges authorship of the piece in his letter to William Dean Howells on December 29, 1870.[3]

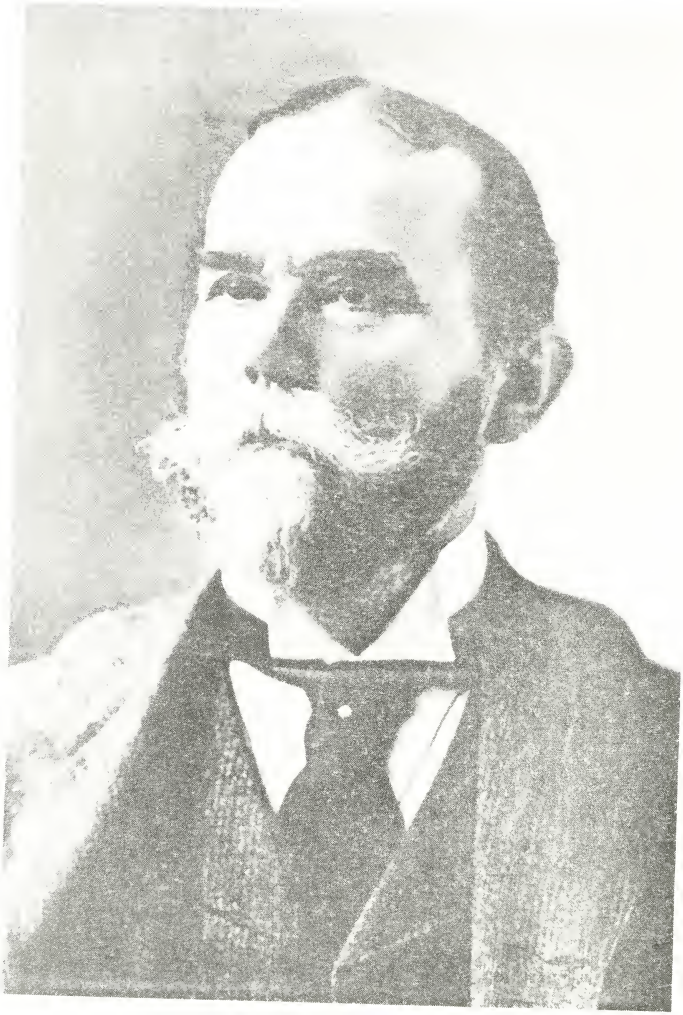
## THE WESTERN SCHOOL

A vigorous and full-flavored literature is growing up in the West. The period of echoes, and imitations, of feeble reproductions of bad models, during which the Poet's Corner of *The Louisville Journal* was the delight of the reading youth of the South-West, has gone by, and a school of writers is now coming up on the further side of the Alleghanies who have a message of their own to deliver, and who are uttering it in a way distinctly their own. It was naturally to be expected that the new and vivid life of California, filled with the boldest and most adventurous elements of East and West, should be the first to inspire a characteristic literature. The spirit of the grotesque has so far greatly tinged the Pacific school. Its leader and founder was Lieut. Derby, whose Phoenixiana are even yet unrivaled in broad and genial absurdity. Dr. J.W. Palmer and the anonymous writers of the "Pioneer" made a hopeful beginning in that field of eccentric fiction which has since been so successfully worked by Mr. Francis Bret Harte and Mark Twain.

The well-earned and legitimate success of these two gentlemen has given occasion to those indolent and ill-informed reviewers who have read nothing of the earlier efforts of the Western school, and only the most recent sketches of the two clever Californians who have taken the public by storn, to imagine that these two writers have a monopoly of Western subjects, and that any hunting in the same preserve is arrant poaching. A writer in a daily paper of this city recently devoted an elaborate column to showing that a poem of Dr. Palmer's was a gross and clumsy imitation of Mr. Harte. We do not care that he was many years in advance of his brilliant competitor, as a delineator of the Western character. It is not less than fifteen years ago that he published a poem in *Putnam's Monthly* called "Used Up," which if reprinted to-day would be called, by all the languid reviewers who saw it was not taken from the *Overland Monthly*, a bold plagiarism from Truthful James.*

There is nothing so easy or so clumsy as to say that when two works bear the natural resemblance arising from coincidence of time, place,

*John W. Palmer's contributions to *Putnam's Monthly* included sketches such as "The Fate of the Farleighs" (October 1856; pp. 384-94), "The Old Adobe" (February 1857; pp. 169-75), and "The Green Cloth" (May 1857; pp. 530-38). But there appears to be no poem entitled "Used Up" in *Putnam's* in the 1850s. Bret Harte first published "Plain Language from Truthful James" in the *Overland Monthly* (September 1870; pp. 287-88).



JOHN HAY

and local color, the one is stolen from the other. Of course, all writers who work in the same age more or less influence each other. If Dickens had never lived we should never have had the "Luck of Roaring Camp." If Thackery had not created Policeman X, it is doubtful if Mr. Harte would ever have imagined the immortal bard of Table Mountain. This detracts nothing from the rightful credit and fame of these exquisite creations. A true genius takes his property where he finds it. Milton used everybody, from Job to Tibullus, and Shakespeare robbed all literature with the sublime consciousness that he poured in more than he took out. It is only maniacs and idiots who have a style of their own, uninfluenced by the current literature and the spiritual atmosphere of the time.

There are too many people in the valley of the Mississippi and beyond to give to any men or set of men the monopoly of the expression of their lives. There will not be many writers who will equal the contagious drollery of Mark Twain. It may be long before we find another that can touch so deftly the hidden sources of smiles and tears-that can give us so grahic a picture of Western living in a style so vivid and so pure that we may call it in praise and not in criticism "almost the true Dickens"—as Mr. Harte has done. But there are many good and honest literary workmen who have grown up in the great West, not unmindful of its strange and striking lessons. Some of them, Howells among the best, have already given some earnest of the promising future. Others are just rising into notice. Let them be received with candor and judged by what they say—not by what others have said.

## NOTES

[1]"Little Breeches," *New York Tribune,* 19 November 1870, p. 5; "Jim Bludso, *New York Tribune,* 5 January 1871, p. 5.

[2]"Which was the Pioneer?" *Literary Digest,* 3 October 1896.

[3]Letter to Howells, 29 December 1870, in *John Hay-Howells Letters,* ed. George Monteiro and Brenda Murphy (Boston: Twayne, 1980), p. 14.

# EDGAR LEE MASTERS' PATERNAL ANCESTRY: A PIONEER HERITAGE AND INFLUENCE

**Charles E. Burgess**

The poetry, novels, and essays of Edgar Lee Masters were influenced significantly by the locales, kinsmen, and experiences of regions of his boyhood and young manhood. Early commentators on his most significant work, *Spoon River Anthology* (1915), were quick to point out the universal verisimilitude that regional realities gave to its art.[1] Masters' creative use of localism was a continuous aspect of his writings. His late prose, especially, turned again and again to the milieu of his youth.[2]

Most frequently, his material drew on his earliest memories around Petersburg, a village in Menard County, Illinois, where he lived until nearly age twelve as the son of a struggling attorney. The hill of New Salem, with its lore of Lincoln, stretched to the south. A north-leading country lane went to the farm of his beloved grandparents, Squire Davis and Lucinda Masters. Almost as often, there is material reflecting Lewistown, fifty miles north in Fulton County, where young Masters lived with his parents for another dozen years. It was a more contentious scene of competing wets and drys, editors and lawyers, with the religious rigidity of ex-New Englanders clashing with convivial individuals of Southern origins. Chicago's blend of rough vitality, cultural stimulation, and urban complexities completed initiation for Masters as he worked as a bill collector and lawyer.[3]

While his own writings and most studies of them have focused on these areas and their influences, there was another region of Illinois that also had a real although less direct stimulus. That was the area lying around Jacksonville, about forty miles southwest of Petersburg, southward about twenty more miles to White Hall. Masters' paternal grandparents were members of pioneer families that settled in this region in a progression of frontier experience that had included earlier soujourns in North Carolina, Virginia, and Tennessee. Masters' knowledge about his kin and the lore of

the Jacksonville region, which includes portions of Morgan, Scott, and Greene counties, was limited. It was drawn chiefly from what his grandparents, who moved to Menard County in 1846 or 1847, had told him, and from a few childhood visits and adult excursions. The poet was nearly sixty, with his major works accomplished, before he investigated the Tennessee regions where the grandparents were children, and he relied on contradictory lore concerning the family's origins farther eastward.

Still, the progress of the Masters family as it moved westward was representative to the poet of conditions of the nation's development, and provided some of the historical and philosophical color that enhanced *Spoon River Anthology* and other works. For example, the family bias—despite its general opposition to slavery—favored the agrarian mode of the South, and recognized little justice in the conquest by the northern states. We find that Masters prefers the southern usage "War Between the States" more frequently than "Civil War" when referring to the conflict.[4]

Masters' most creative use of family lore was drawn from the experiences of his grandmother, Lucinda, and her forebears, the Wasson branch. There was the trauma of Revolutionary War separation in North Carolina, the milieu of Jackson around Nashville, Tennessee, and the subsequent residence near Jacksonville where Lucinda "went to the dances at Chandlerville/ And played snap-out at Winchester." I have traced her line of the family and its influence on her grandson's art in a separate study.[5] Another facet in ancestral lore in the main Masters paternal line was the supposed kinship with a Knottley, or Notley, Masters. The suppositions of the Masters family members who remained in Tennessee were that this individual brought the line to America in the mid-eighteenth century, and that he was a direct ancestor of themselves and of the poet. I have investigated this theory in another analysis.[6]

The present study will focus on the facts and lore about individuals surnamed Masters who were paternal line ancestors of Edgar Lee Masters. The aim is twofold: to resolve some of the confusing allusions in Masters' autobiographical works for the benefit of future scholars, and to suggest some of the ways in which the experiences of the Masters family were sources in Edgar Lee Masters' poetry and fiction. In accumulating data, I have benefited considerably from the research and suggestions of several descendants of the family, especially Margaret Masters Buehrig of Bloomington, Indiana, Dero Darwin, Jr., of Cookeville, Tennessee, Genell Masters Wynn of Madison, Tennessee, the late Robert Eldridge of Livingston, Tennessee, and Melba Wood of Chesterfield, Illinois. Along with them, I have endeavored to apply the resources and techniques of genealogical research to the task.

The genealogies of such well-traced Southern families as the Boones and the Lincolns show patterns of migration from eastern ports with successive residence in areas of Maryland, Pennsylvania, western Virginia, and the Carolinas. This gradual southward shifting was especially characteristic of

such minorities as the Scotch-Irish, the Welsh, and the German immigrants. They had reached the colonies in search of land and opportunity, and to escape economic and religious oppression. In America, many of them preferred to have some distance between themselves and the silk-stockinged governmental and ecclesiastical authorities of the coastal capitals. They resisted tax levies and commercial restrictions with sometimes bloody belligerence.

The back county of North Carolina in the 1770s was becoming settled by diverse groups. There were elements from the tidewater counties, encouraged to move westward in the previous thirty years by the land terms made available by the foresighted Earl Granville. He also had sent emissaries into the Valley of Virginia to encourage emigration. By the late 1740s, many families of Scotch-Irish origins moved from the valley, or through it from places in Maryland and Pennsylvania, to populate the North Carolina land between the Catawba and Yadkin Rivers. The next two decades brought an influx of the tolerant, communal Moravians to develop the region they called Wachovia. In 1753, northwest North Carolina became Rowan County, which extended vaguely across the northern section of what would become Tennessee. In North Carolina, some fifteen counties eventually were formed from the original Rowan. Most of the divisions took place after the period with which this study of the passage of the Masters family is concerned. However, it is pertinent to note that Rowan's area nearest to Virginia was set off in 1770 as Surry County, with Wilkes County taking over the western part of that region in 1777.[7]

Edgar Lee Masters was aware of a period of North Carolina residence in the ancestry of his grandmother, Lucinda, but referred to his grandfather's forebears as Virginians. In a 1904 genealogy compiled by the poet's father-in-law are the statements "Hillory Masters emigrated from Wales and settled in Wythe County, Virginia. . . . Thomas Masters, son of Hillory, removed from Virginia to Tennessee early in the last century."[8] In a 1926 article, Masters wrote "My ancestor, Hillory Masters, was in the war of American Independence. Whether or not he was one of those who enlisted from Wythe County, Virginia, at any rate, that was his home after the war."[9] In 1927, on a trip through Tennessee, Masters encountered in Livingston, county seat of Overton County, descendants of the brothers of his great-grandfather Thomas, who had left about 1830 for Morgan County, Illinois. From Robert Simon Masters, who apparently had done some tracing of lineage, the poet learned of the supposed earlier ancestor, "Knottley." This individual was said to have been driven from his home in Wales by a cruel stepmother; a ship rescued him from an island, taking him to Virginia. In his 1936 autobiography, Edgar Lee Masters wrote that Robert Simon Masters "also wrote me about his grandfather Hillory, or Hilary, Masters, who was born in that part of Virginia which became in 1790 Wythe County; and this tallied with what my grandfather had told me as a youth, including what he said of Hilary's children and career. Hilary was a soldier in the Revolution.

He moved to Overton County in 1804 and died there."[10] The claim for Virginia ancestry was especially sweeping in Masters' last major work, *The Sangamon* (1942), where he said of his grandfather, Squire Davis Masters, "his father, his father's father and grandfather were born in Virginia."[11]

There certainly was, as will be detailed, a period of residence for the Masters family in southwest Virgina, but the best evidence is of North Carolina locations for much of three decades before the move to Overton County. There were in Rowan County and its subsequent divisions, in the late eighteenth century, a number of Masterses of likely, though uncertain relationship to Hillery, the best-documented spelling for the name of the known ancestor. The family probably had nearly a century of prior residence in Maryland, as I have reviewed from substantial evidence elsewhere.[12] In 1772 the Moravian scribes had recorded the arrival in the Wachovian settlement of Bethabara, North Carolina, of "Nodley Masters," who appears later in the Revolutionary War service and census records of South Carolina.[13] In the 1780s and 1790s, will, deed, and marriage records are documented in Surry County, set off from Rowan but still including portions of present-day Wilkes and Yadkin counties, showing activities of an interrelated group of Masterses. The elder, based on the evidence, was William. His 1793 will lists property totaling 640 acres. Names mentioned are that of his wife, Mary, sons Nicholas and James, and daughters Elizabeth Shaw, Ann Long, and Mary Davis. Another son, Joseph, apparently had died more than a decade earlier; in a will drawn June 14, 1781, he named as beneficiaries brothers Nicholas and James, both under age 21. The 1790 federal census for Surry County lists William, Nicholas and James. James was bondsman for Nicholas' application September 22, 1786, to wed Elizabeth McDaniel. James' bond to wed Elizabeth Poe is dated July 17, 1792. The names of these two brothers appear in many other subsequent Surry County deed records; estate files indicate Nicholas and Elizabeth died in 1810 and James in 1838.[14]

A relationship with Hillery is suggested by both his proximity in the period and by the given names. Evidence discovered by Mrs. Buehrig indicates Notley and Hillery were brothers, that their grandfather's name was William, and that there was a pattern of reoccurence of given names in descending and collateral branches.[15] Hillery was in residence in Surry County as late as 1800 as shown by census records; his bride in 1779 was surnamed "Davies," conjecturally a sister of the Davis who married William Masters' daughter; and Hillery had been bonded for the marriage in Salisbury in nearby Rowan County.

The marriage bond, executed on December 23, 1779, is the earliest document located in this research that bears Hillery's name. The signature spelling appears to be "Hillery," although the notary's script spells it "Hilary." The latter form became the more common for descendants, including Edgar Lee Masters' younger son. The bride's name is given as "Mary Davies." She frequently was called Polly, a common substitution for

Mary in the period, according to lore possessed by the Overton County Masterses and also apparently by Squire Davis Masters.[16] The other signatures on the marriage bond have triggered much conjecture among genealogists who have tried to trace the family. These signers were Notley Masters as joint pledger of the required 500 pounds, and "B. Booth Boote" as the notarizing official.[17]

The Overton County Masters descendants consistently told researchers, including Edgar Lee Masters, as already noted, that Hillery and Notley had been Virginians. Although Robert S. Masters apparently knew something about the marriage bond, he did not place its origins in North Carolina. Dero Darwin Jr. discovered the document and some of the others pertaining to the Carolina Masterses in 1958,[18] eight years after Edgar Lee Masters died. No contact of Notley with Hillery is documented other than the marriage bond; my separate study concludes the relationship was not father and son.

While Notley had well-documented Revolutionary War service, proof to sustain the same for Hillery has not been located. The claim came down through several branches of the family. Edgar Lee Masters indicated he was told by both Square David Masters and Robert S. Masters that "Hilary was a soldier in the Revolution."[19] Researcher Mrs. Sidney Crockett, of Nashville, got essentially the same statement in extensive interviews with the Overton County Masterses in 1954.[20] In family correspondence possessed by Mrs. Buehrig from the 1920s, Robert S. Masters said "I think I have heard my father [Hillery's son John] say that he [Hillery] was a soldier in the Revolutionary War."[21]

It is reasonable to suppose that, like many young men in the back country, Hillery did see militia service as the British advance passed through the Carolinas in the early 1780s. The "B. Booth Boote" signature on Hillery's marriage bond has intrigued some researchers. Benjamin Boote, or Booth, was persecuted early in the Revolutionary conflict by Rowan County safety committees on suspicion of loyalist sympathies.[22] Some North Carolina Masterses were loyalists, but none with names common in Hillery's line, as far as is known, up to that time.[23] In an unpublished family sketch, Robert Eldridge recorded, "it is family tradition that Hillery Masters secured a land grant in Tennessee from the State of North Carolina for 640 acres of land for his services as a soldier in the Revolutionary War."[24] While this has not been verified, it does support the lore of Hillery's participation in the American cause.

The ancestry of Mary Davies (as the notary spelled the name) has not been discovered. The surname in that form and by its more common spelling is found frequently in North Carolina and western Virginia records of the late eighteenth century.[25] The form "Davis" has been used as a given name in most generations of the descending branches of the family. For example, it was bestowed as the middle name for the poet's grandfather, an uncle, younger brother, and nephew.

Rowan County historians have suggested that Davis families that came

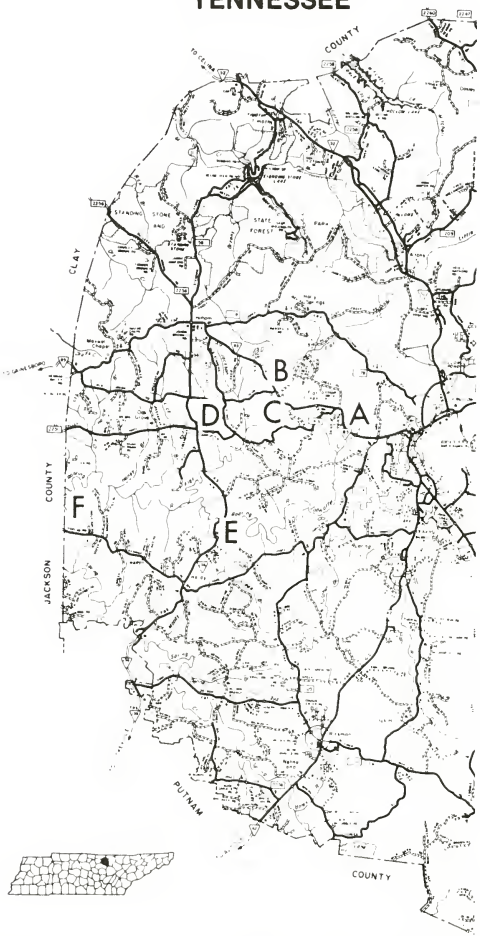
there early probably were Baptists or Quakers.[26] A "Scotton Davis" was a captain in the county's militia in 1753.[27] Between 1760 and 1787, Rowan County tax lists and other records show Davieses or Davises with the given names Benjamin, Charles, David, Myrick, Henry, Hugh, James, Joseph, and John.[28] The marriage of one of the daughters of a Surry County Masters to a man surnamed Davis already has been discussed. Links of the Davis, or Davies, family with Masterses seem to have continued after Hillery's family had become established in Overton County, Tennessee. In 1817 a William Davis of Surry County, North Carolina, gave William Masters (Hillery's son or brother) of Overton County power of attorney, as "my trusty friend," to sell 275 acres lying along Roaring River in Overton County.[29] A William Davis also is mentioned in a state land grant deed for 225 acres in Overton County as having owned this land in 1809, two years before its transfer to Charles Matlock.[30] I will explore later in this study the links between the Matlocks and Masterses.

However, a quarter-century and several moves in the northwest North Carolina, southwest Virginia, and eastern Tennessee region would come between the time of Hillery and Mary's marriage and the trek to what became Overton County. Tax lists for 1788 and 1789 show him liable for taxes for those years, on two and three horses respectively, while residing in the "Crooked Creek, Chestnut Creek" area of what then was Montgomery County, Virgina, near the border with North Carolina's Surry County.[31] Late in 1789 this area became part of Wythe County. Subsequently it was included in Grayson County (1792) and finally in Carroll County (1842).

The location was near the trails by which Virginians and Carolinians were moving via the Watauga and Holston River valleys into what became Tennessee in 1796. Along the lower Holston, Hawkins County had been established as a North Carolina County in 1787; its seat, Rogersville, dated from 1772. This is where we next locate Hillery, as purchaser on September 10, 1794 for $333 of 250 acres from John Thompson. It is possible Hillery never actually resided there. Less than a year later, on August 31, 1795, Hillery and "Mary Masters his wife" are recorded as selling the same land "on the South Side of Holston River on both sides of Beech Creek" to Andrew Smithers.[32] A census record locates Hillery back in Surry County, North Carolina, in 1800.

Before reviewing that record, one other possible land acquisition by Hillery in eastern Tennessee can be noted. The deed has not been located in any record, but there is an indirect reference in a Roane County survey report of June 25, 1814, noting John Craig's acreage "joins line of Hillary Masters."[33] Other records about Hillery Masters located by me and other genealogists fit the pattern of life of one individual. The reference to land within the present boundaries of Roane County "on old Indian Fork of Poplar Creek" may be an exception. By 1814, the Hillery Masters we are pursuing had been in Overton County, some fifty miles northwest of

# WESTERN OVERTON COUNTY, TENNESSEE




A Site of Thomas Masters farm and spring at bluff above Flatt Creek

B Site of John S. Masters farm

C Mary Davies Masters burial site. Hillery's remains may have been moved there

D Hillery Masters original burial site

E Camp Ground; Site on Roaring River of Hillery Masters' first farm (1804) Jackson County

F Davis Masters, uncle of Squire Davis Masters, farm c.1830

Roane's northern border, for a decade. County boundaries had shifted in the period, and many records were lost or never formally recorded. The Roane County area, downstream along the Holston-Tennessee Valley, was on one of the routes used to reach the middle Tennessee area where Overton was created in 1806, so it is possible that the known Hillery Masters might have purchased land there. Also possible is that another individual by that name had reached maturity around the second decade of the nineteenth century, since not all the names of Hillery's brothers and their sons are known.

As we have seen, Hillery appears to have been in the Montgomery-Wythe area of southwestern Virginia around 1790, when the first federal census was taken. The Virginia tabulation perished in the burning of Washington during the War of 1812. In 1800, Hillery's household was in Surry County, North Carolina. While this accounting (spelling the name "Hilery") and others prior to 1850 listed only the head of the household by name, the 1800 enumeration of males and females by approximate age does give substantial evidence about the nature of Hillery's growing family. He and Mary had been married more than twenty years when it was taken. It tabulates two males under age ten, two ten to sixteen, two sixteen to twenty-six and one twenty-six to forty-five (Hillery). There is one female under ten, one ten to sixteen, and one twenty-six to forty-five (Mary).[34]

Based on evidence which will be documented below, the census accounts for seven of the nine known children of Hillery and Mary. Son James probably was born in 1800, after the census was taken, and son John a year later. The tabulated children, and ages they were at or near, would have been Robert, seventeen; Thomas (father of Squire Davis Masters), thirteen; William and Nancy (probably twins), twelve; Jesse, eight; Sarah, between five and seven; and Davis, four. The evidence compiled by descendants does not account for the additional male age sixteen to twenty-six. He probably was not a brother of Hillery, since "according to the tradition of the Masters family, Hilary was the youngest son. . . ."[35] Mrs. Buehrig suggests the unidentified youth may have been Martin Masters and that he may have been either a son or nephew of Hillery. Martin was a witness in 1823 in Overton County, along with John Masters, to a land transaction between William and Thomas Masters.[36] The latter three are verified sons of Hillery. However, the unidentifed male could have been simply a "hired man."

There is insufficient space or purpose for this study to follow at length the careers and descending lineage of children of Hillery and Mary, other than Thomas, the ancestor of the poet. Some tracing has been useful because of the facts thereby gleaned about Squire Davis Masters, Thomas and Hillery. In summary, here is what is known about the others:

Robert was born March 9, 1783. A Bible entry located by Merry Ann Kinkaid Malcolm gives the birth place as Rowan County, North Carolina, which is evidence of Hillery's whereabouts four years after his marriage in

the same county.[37] The same record lists Robert's wife as Sarah Cain, born 1794 in Tennessee, with the marriage occuring in 1811 in Overton County. They were parents of at least ten children born between 1812 and 1832, including sons named Hillery and Davis.[38] Robert moved to Morgan County, Illinois, about 1834, where Thomas had moved four years earlier. Sarah died in late 1834 or early 1835. Robert died at age eighty-six on February 19, 1870, according to the research of descendants.[39]

William and Nancy were born August 26, 1788, and apparently in what then was part of Montgomery County, Virginia. A number of land dealing records and slave transactions indicate William resided after maturity chiefly in Jackson County, parent and neighboring county to Overton, although the William Davis power-of-attorney lists William Masters as an Overton County resident in 1817. A Jackson County census record of 1850 lists a William Masters as age sixty-two, which is consistent with the 1788 birth year. By tradition, he was married twice. The first wife's name is thought to have been Nancy Alley (or Allen) born about 1803. William's "broken slate headstone," the date of death apparently illegible, is in Clay County, Tennessee, cemetery near the northern border of Overton and Jackson, according to family researchers.[40]

Nancy, probably a twin of William, married Joseph Goodbar in Overton County on September 13, 1808. Her death occurred October 27, 1855, and Joseph's on December 9, 1859, in Overton County. Robert Eldridge located their burial place as the Pangle Cemetery there.[41]

Jesse was born November 22, 1791. One source, a son's census listing, gives the birth state as North Carolina; others indicate Virginia, which would be consistent with the Hillery Masters tax record described *supra*. A Bible record located by the Darwins of Cookeville, Tennessee, shows that Jesse on January 16, 1817, married Hannah Byrd Gore, who was born September 5, 1795. They were parents of at least six daughters and one son, born between 1818 and 1830, according to information supplied by Genell Masters Wynn of Madison, Tennessee, a descendant of Jesse. He died November 19, 1829, in Overton County.[43]

Sarah Masters' dates of birth, marriage, and death are uncertain. A birth year from 1792 to 1795 is presumed, based on the 1800 census tabulation. She may have wed more than once. Oscar Eldridge, one of the Overton County historians of the Masters family, suggested that "Tom Cain" and a man surnamed Draper (Christian name unknown) may have been the husbands.[44] Interestingly, a Draper lineage lists a "James Hillery Draper" birth of 1866–a probable recurrence of the name of Sarah's father.[45]

Davis Masters was born May 10, 1796, according to the Darwins, who are descendants. Sons, recorded in censuses between 1850 and 1880, gave Davis' birth state as North Carolina in two instances; Virginia in two others. He married Susanah Hinds in about 1818. Her birth and death dates are April 15, 1802, and August 16, 1875, and he died November 23, 1882. By tradition they are buried on a hill on the farm they occupied in Overton

County.[46]

James Masters' dates of birth, death, and marriage also are uncertain. The 1800 Surry County, North Carolina, census seems to not include him, so it is presumed that he was born in late 1800 or soon thereafter. Individuals named James Masters in two Overton County censuses fit this pattern: In 1820 one was eighteen to twenty-six, with a wife sixteen to twenty-six; in 1830 the listed James Masters was thirty to forty.[47] Documents secured by Robert Eldridge from another Masters descendant indicate that in May, 1838, James, John, and Davis Masters were involved with "Mary Masters, relic and widow of Hilary Masters, deceased" in division of Hillery's property some twenty-four years after Hillery's death.[48] James may have died or left Overton County prior to 1840. Robert Eldridge identified his wife as Betsy Thompson; an Elizabeth Masters is head of an Overton County household in the 1840 and 1850 censuses. The James Masters who married Betsy Thompson probably was a son of William Masters, according to Dero Darwin, Jr's reasoning.[49]

John S. Masters, apparently the youngest son of Hillery and Mary, is the best-documented of the descendants and the last of their children-unless several speculative births are included.[50] His family Bible data shows his birth as March 12, 1801, probably in Surry County, North Carolina. His marriage in Overton County to Judith Barbara Riley occurred September 22, 1827. She was born January 11, 1811, and died November 30, 1885. There were 14 children, including sons named Hilery, James, Jesse, John, Thomas, Issac (Mrs. Buehrig's grandfather), and Robert Simon, who was Edgar Lee Masters' informant and grandfather of the Eldridge brothers.[51] I learned much of the lore of the family of the older John Masters in the early 1970s in interviews with three of his elderly grandsons. There is insufficient space to detail it, but his death on December 25, 1866, allegedly from pneumonia caught while burying gold obtained by distilling, is part of Tennessee folklore.[52]

In a 1927 letter to Mrs. Buehrig's father, Robert S. Masters, son of John and grandson of Hillery, wrote that "Grandfather moved to Overton County when my father was only three years old."[53] That would be in 1804 or early 1805; the year Edgar Lee Masters gives is 1804. Oscar and Robert Eldridge give 1803 as the year of arrival of Hillery and his family in a portion of Jackson County that would become Overton County in 1806. By tradition, according to Oscar Eldridge, Hillery's first farm was in the southwest portion of present-day Overton County "near Roaring River, on what is now known as the M.A. Hardy old home place. I think he moved later to near Flat[t] Creek in the Mt. Gilead community, about four miles south-east of Hilham and about 5 or 6 miles west of Livingston." The Flatt Creek location was near the "Jackson Old Courthouse" site, where county business had been transacted before the Jackson seat was moved to Gainesboro. Notes by Robert Eldridge recount that the trek from North Carolina was, by tradition, at least partially over mountain routes across the Smokies and Cumberland

ranges before the Hillery Masters family first located near what now is the community of Windle.[54]

Records of land holdings or other activities mentioning Hillery himself–except for the 1838 estate settlement–have not been located. The Eldridges believed they may have perished in a fire at the Jackson County courthouse. Hillery's year of death is approximated as 1814 because sale deeds for property in the Flatt Creek area bear the name of Mary Masters, presumably Hillery's widow, as early as January 12, 1815.[55] Actually, she had acquired land in July, 1814, in her own name, in a deed witnessed by William Masters.[56] The federal census of Overton County in 1820 lists "Mary Masters" as over age forty-five and head of a household of one other member, a male age eighteen to twenty-six, probably son John. Other sons Robert, William, Jesse, Davis, Thomas, and James are listed separately in the same census with their age ranges corresponding to the reasoning already detailed.[57]

A meat fork possessed by a descendant in Livingston appears to be the only surviving relic of Hillery's household.[58] A few traditions of the domestic style of Hillery and his wife have survived, summarized by Oscar Eldridge: "Hilary Masters was a kind old man and was agreeable to get along with. His wife was said to have been a high tempered woman." John S. Masters would have just entered his teens in 1814, presumably the year of Hillery's death. His account of the domestic discord passed down through Robert S. Masters to Riley Masters, who was ninety-two when I interviewed him in 1971: "They said–my daddy's told me–that she [Mary] was awful mean to him [Hillery]. They didn't get along. She was just as mean to him as she could be and when he died she had him buried over there on the Graveyard Hill. . . . She didn't want to be buried by him. She told 'em never to take her over there, said she wanted to be buried up in the Masters graveyard, and they buried here there."[59]

The site of Hillery's burial, by the 1970s, was a tangle of overgrowth on a bluff on the Charles Allred farm, overlooking Flatt Creek. Descendants could recall no marker; the site had been farmed over, with some stones pushed into an earthen dam, according to several accounts.[60]

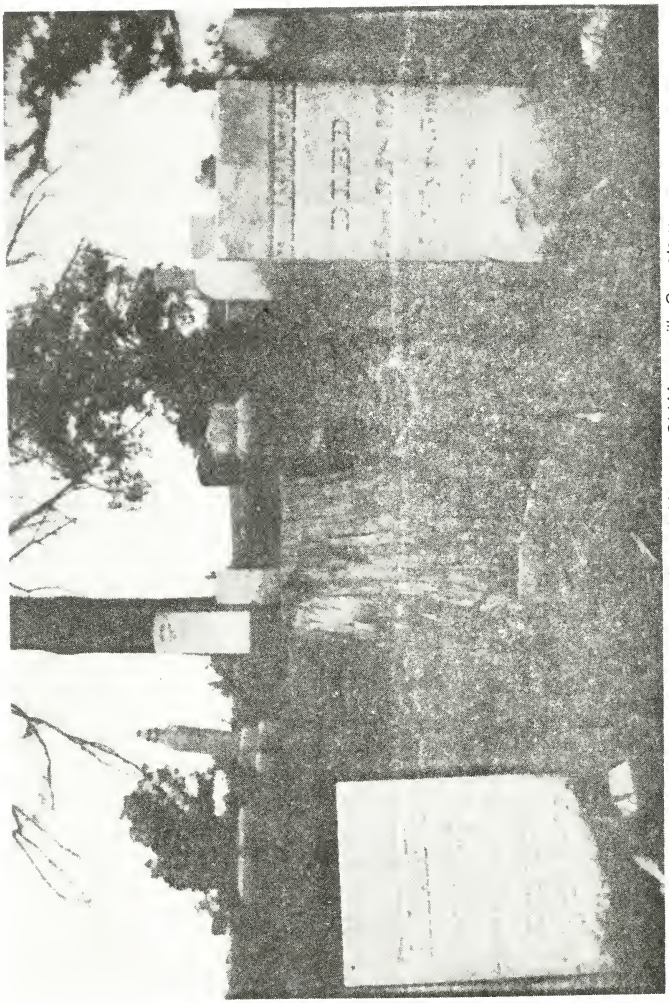
Census data shows a female fifty to sixty years old in 1830 in the John S. Masters household, and one eighty to ninety in 1840.[61] The former was probably a mismark, for Mary, assuming she married in 1779 at about age twenty, would have been in her mid-eighties on June 15, 1845. This death date is recorded in the John S. Masters family Bible. Her burial place, with other Masterses who lived in Overton County in the early nineteenth century, is in an overgrown hillside plot on the Edd Long farm, reachable by a back road from the route to Mount Gilead Church. Riley Masters identified the site of Mary's grave as close to that of his grandmother, Barbara, where a marker was placed in 1967 by Riley and his brothers. An historian of neighborhood families, the Rev. Oscar Nolen, told me that Hillery's remains had been moved to the site after Mary's death.[62] Oscar Eldridge's account

is that "they dug into the grave and found that the coffin and body was decayed so badly that they filled the grave up and let him stay where he was."

In contrast to the puzzling and often conjectural information about his parents, brothers, and sisters, the career of Thomas Masters, great-grandfather of Edgar Lee Masters, is quite well documented. The dates inscribed on his stone in Bethel Cemetery near Murrayville, Illinois, indicate a birthdate of August 1, 1787. By the tradition so frequently mentioned, it was in an area of Montgomery County, Virginia, that two years later became part of Wythe County.

Overton County records show Thomas as a landowner, juryman, militiaman and slaveowner. In 1813, on October 26, Thomas and Jesse Masters were among petitioners to the Tennessee General Assembly for raising of "a force of 500 mounted men" to fight Indians. Thomas may have taken part, with Jesse, in the expedition against the Creeks early in the following year.[63] Thomas received a grant of twenty-five acres on March 30, 1813, signed by Willie Blount, Tennessee governor.[64] Thirty acres were conveyed to Thomas by his brother William on January 13, 1823. An extensive purchase of 329 acres was made by Thomas Masters on October 11, 1826, from Abraham Goodpasture, who was a member of a family that maintained ties of friendship and intermarriage with the Masterses later in Morgan and Menard counties in Illinois. Thomas sold the same land on December 26, 1829, to Samuel Mitchell[65] just prior to the move of the Thomas Masters family to Morgan County. It was a financial loss for Thomas Masters, since he received only $560 in comparison to the $700 he had paid to Goodpasture.

The site of Thomas Masters' farm was pointed out to me in 1971 by Robert Eldridge. About three miles southwest of Livingston it lies along Flatt Creek and the road to Hilham. The farm later was part of a Civil War training ground called Camp Zollicoffer. A small stream emerges from a bluff in a picturesque spring that apparently had been described to the poet by his grandfather, Squire Davis Masters. Springs had provided more than aesthetic enjoyment to the Masterses in Overton County. The elderly Masters brothers told me they were the source of the pure water John S. Masters used in distilling. Riley Masters recalled that in Edgar Lee Masters' letters to Robert S. Masters "he was asking him about a lot of springs that they was in this country. . . ."[66] Squire Davis Masters, born November 28, 1812, spent his first seventeen years in this hilly, yellow-clay region of small cleared fields amid stands of pine and rockstrewn creeks including "the brook which ran across his father's farm into which he put pebbles to be rolled over by the water until they were made into round marbles." When the grandfather spoke of the area, it was with "melancholy accents," the poet recalled; about 1877 Squire Davis Masters "had made a trip to Overton County, Tennessee, which he had not seen since 1829, nearly fifty years. He found that every trace of his father's house was gone. . . ."[67] The



Graves of Thomas and Elizabeth Masters, Old Murrayville Cemetery.

doleful accounting of the changes in the region of the grandfather's youth made a deep impression on the poet, not yet ten. In *Spoon River Anthology*, there is imagery that recalls the description of the brook on Thomas Masters' farm as the photographer "Rutherford McDowell" scans ambrotypes of the old pioneers:

> That mystical pathos of dropped eyelids,
> And the serene sorrow of their eyes.
> It was like a pool of water,
> Amid oak trees at the edge of a forest,
> Where the leaves fall. . . [68]

Although an antipathy toward slavery came to be considered as a principal reason for Thomas Masters' departure from Tennessee, the lure of the rich, cheap lands in Illinois probably played a larger part. A Menard County history's sketch of Squire Davis Masters' background, mentioning his father, is characteristic of the anti-slavery sentiment of Illinois, rather than that of north central Tennessee: "slavery prevailing, and he [Thomas] having seen enough of its workings, he resolved to go north, and, in the year 1830, went to Morgan Co., not far from what is now Jacksonville."[69] Edgar Lee Masters echoed this passage in writing that Thomas "hated slavery, and on coming to Illinois in 1829 emancipated his one slave. The deed of emanicaption may be read at the courthouse in Livingston, Overton County, Tennessee, to this day."[70] This document would have been one, certainly, that Edgar Lee Masters sought in his one day in Livingston in 1927. I have not located it, nor did Robert Eldridge, the most assiduous compiler of Masters-related records in the county before his death April 28, 1979. There is a record of Thomas' purchase from Drusis Riggs for $500 on September 15, 1819 of "a certain Negro girl named 'Viney' about twelve years old. . . ."[71] There is no tabulation indicating the girl's presence in Thomas Masters' household in either the 1820 Overton County census or that of 1830 in Morgan County, Illinois, so her length of stay with the family is uncertain.

A Bible record that Edgar Lee Masters discovered in a 1917 trip to Morgan County gives the date of Thomas' marriage to "Elizabeth Matlock daughter of Charles and Susanne Matlock" as December 15, 1811, Elizabeth's birth date as May 10, 1796, and her date of death as July 26, 1845.[72] This tallies with the tombstone information in Bethel Cemetery showing she died at age "49 years, 2 months." The Matlock surname carried sturdy agrarian connotations pleasing to her poet great-grandson. It was adapted for the *Spoon River* characters, "Lucinda Matlock" and "Davis Matlock," who reflect Squire Davis and Lucinda Masters, and further in "Madison Matlock" and "Rita Matlock Gruenberg" of *The New Spoon River*. These two troubled cosmopolitans are, in part, portraits of Masters himself and of his sister, with their lives contrasted with the rural placidity of

the grandparents.[73]

Numerous Matlocks, including those with given names of Charles, William, George, John, and Moore, were listed in pre-1830 Overton County records.[74] However, Matlock family researchers including Mrs. Melba Wood of Illinois and Mrs. Jess Armstrong of Nacogoches, Texas, point to a Charles Matlock of Grainger County, Tennessee, as the probable father of Elizabeth. The chief evidence is an indenture made September 13, 1796, by Jacob Kennedy in behalf of "the heirs of Charles Matlock deceased." His widow, "Susanah Matlock" is named as executor.[75] Grainger County, set off from Knox and Hawkins in 1796, was in eastern Tennessee along the route where settlers were migrating to central and western parts of the state, as the Masters family had done. The Matlock researchers have discovered a common pattern of names extending from Virginia counties into the Carolinas, Tennessee and Kentucky. However, the actual forebears of Charles Matlock of Grainger County and his wife Susanah have not been identified positively. Susanah, or Suzanne, probably was a relatively young woman with an infant (Elizabeth) at the time of Charles' death, and remarriage to someone who settled in Overton County is one likelihood.[76]

Thomas Masters, as a member of Hillery's family, had come to the Jackson-Overton County area at age sixteen or seventeen when settlements were new. Not until 1806 was the threat of Indian resistance removed by a cession that included what became the western part of Overton County. At age twenty-four, Thomas had married Elizabeth, then fifteen. He seems to have been reasonably prosperous, and his family grew rapidly. By 1820, as the census records, there were two sons and two daughters.[77] Another son and three more daughters would be born before the move to Illinois in late 1829 or early 1830. Thomas probably had opportunities for his children as a motive for the move. The potential of thin-soiled hills and bottoms of Overton County was limited, compared to the expanses of Illinois lands that Thomas probably observed in 1829 before he sold the Tennessee acreage. Even well into the late nineteenth century, the forests and canebrakes of Overton County were formidable obstacles, and the cleared land was quickly exhausted, according to Ridley Masters. One of the family members who remained in the Flatt Creek area, he was ninety-five when I interviewed him in 1972: "The land was good, when it was first cleared up. They 'us a lot of good land, and right smart of bottom land on these creeks and around. It 'us good. It made a sight of stuff, but people kind of butchered over it, 'til they wore it out."[78]

Morgan County, Illinois, had been established in 1823 and until 1839 included the area that became Scott County. It appears that Thomas was the first of the Overton County Masterses to move there, although Morgan's records show several other individuals with the same surname before 1830. Thus there is a possibility that some relatives may have preceded him. A sketch of James Madison Masters, a son of Thomas, in a 1906 Morgan County history, notes the assertion by the son "that the family entered the

State in 1818. . . . Other accounts are to the effect that they did not arrive in Illinois until 1830."[79] According to family tradition, which would agree with the evidence of a move in the winter of 1829-1830, the move was by ox-drawn wagons when roads were frozen sufficiently for traveling.[80]

A fictional treatment of the migration by Edgar Lee Masters uses some elements of the real move, but alters others. In *The Nuptial Flight* (1923), the "Thomas Houghton" family leaves the Louisville, Kentucky, area in 1849, traveling by steamboat on the Ohio and Mississippi and by stage to "Whitehall," Illinois. There, with money inherited from his father who has just died in Virginia, Thomas purchases land in Greene County, which is immediately below Morgan County. Before leaving Kentucky, William–the novel's counterpart to Squire Davis Masters–"takes a parting look at the brook where he had made marbles by leaving pebbles to be turned by the tumbling water." Besides eldest son William, widower Thomas has two other children, Madison and Elvira. William supplements his income by hauling brick for building in Whitehall.[81]

Much of the responsiblity during the actual overland trek, and during Thomas Masters' presumed absence from Overton County, must have fallen on the deep-eyed, serious son, Squire Davis Masters, who was seventeen when the change was made. His given name reflected the admiration of pioneers of the time for the Boone family. Daniel Boone's father had borne the given name of "Squire."[82] Another son, James Madison Masters, named in admiration of the Federalist president, was twelve at the time of the move. His life bears little resemblance to that of the hard-drinking, irresponsible "Madison Houghton" of the novel.

The Thomas Masters family apparently stayed only briefly on their first claim in Morgan County. The sketch of James Madison Masters recounts that the "first location was on a tract of unimproved land situated about three miles northwest of the site of the city of Jacksonville. Shortly afterward the father brought his family to a log cabin which stood on the site of what is now the campus of Illinois College. In the fall of 1830 they again removed to a tract of land about a mile and a half west of Murrayville, which had been entered as a Government claim; and this was the home of James Madison Masters during the remaining years of his active life."[83]

Jacksonville was something of a boom town by 1830, according to descriptions left by travelers such as poet-editor William Cullen Bryant, whose brothers farmed nearby. In a novel called *Children of the Market Place*, Edgar Lee Masters caught the aura of its early days. The narrator, Englishman James Miles, has been escorted to Jacksonville by ex-Tennessean Reverdy Clayton, also a fictional verson of Squire Davis Masters. Miles' description: "As I walked along I could see that the boundless prairie was around me. I inhaled the spaciousness of the scene. I could see the deep woods which stood beyond the rich prairies of tall and heavy grass. The town was built roughly of hewn logs. It was like a camp of hastily constructed shacks. But a college had already been founded. It had

two buildings, one of logs and one of brick."[84] New England ministers had founded Illinois College in 1829. It began holding classes in January 1830, and Squire Davis Masters had earned subsistence for his family by hauling bricks for "Beecher Hall," which still stands. He did not attend it, but two of his sons did as did other descendants of Thomas, several of whom taught there.[85]

Deed records at the Morgan County courthouse verify the family's moves. Their first residence was a 160-acre tract in Concord Township on hilly land that may have appealed to Thomas because of its resemblance to Tennessee land. But the advantages of prairie residence were obvious; on September 10, 1830, he sold the Concord tract to Joseph Duncan for $500. A ledger recording the taking up of government claims shows Thomas acquiring 160 acres on September 14, 1830, the southeast quarter of Section 13 North, Range 11 West, in what is now extreme southwest Morgan County.[86] At the time Manchester, now in Scott County, was the nearest village. Murrayville, the village now nearest the site of the Thomas Masters property, was not laid out until a railroad was constructed in the late 1860s. Descendants of Thomas, including James Madison Masters, had a hand in its growth. It has a Masters street and a Masters addition. In time, Thomas' holdings or those of his descendants extended west into Scott County and south into Greene County. The successive owners of the basic Masters farm were Thomas, James Madison Masters until his death April 3 1898; James' son Squire Davis Masters (1848-1904), who had been named for his uncle who moved on to Menard County and also died in 1904; and Arthur Masters, who guided Edgar Lee Masters and his father, Hardin Wallace Masters, on a day's visit to the area in 1917. Today the Masters name is virtually extinct in Morgan County, although descendants named Newcomb still own part of the land near Murrayville.[87]

On October 20, 1848, three months before his death on January 9, 1849 (not 1847 as Edgar Lee Masters says in *Across Spoon River*), Thomas drew the will which was probated on January 6. Squire Davis Masters and James Madison Masters were named executors. Tax receipts show that, at the time of his death, Thomas owned 465 acres.[88] Thomas apparently made some division of his property before his death, since eighty acres was recorded as being received by Squire Davis Masters January 16, 1848.[89] According to Edgar Lee Masters, Thomas bequeathed $600 to Squire Davis Masters which he used to expand his holdings in Menard County where he had moved in late 1845 or early 1846.[90] The cash may have represented a settlement with James Madison Masters for the property in Morgan County. They were the only sons of age; the will had named them guardians of Thomas' "infant [minor] sons Robert Masters, William Masters and Wilbourne Masters."

As one drives along Illinois Highway 267 about a mile southwest of Murrayville, old Bethel Cemetery is visible to the north. A tall, dignified shaft marks the grave of James Madison Masters and his children. Nearby are

short, rounded markers that Edgar Lee Masters and his father failed to find on the 1917 trip. They read: "Thomas Masters died Jan. 9, 1849 age 61 years, 5 months, 9 days" and "Elizabeth Wife of Thomas Masters died July 26, 1845 age 49 years, 2 months."

Thomas and Elizabeth were parents of at least twelve children. A basic source of information about them is the copy Edgar Lee Masters made during the 1917 trip of entries in a Bible inscribed "Thomas Masters bought of H. Wallace April 7, 1846." The Rev. Hardin Wallace, for whom Edgar Lee Masters' father was named, was an early Methodist minister in central Illinois.[91] When the data was copied by the poet, the Bible was possessed by Wilbur Edgar Masters. Whether it still exists is unknown. Some miscopying of dates and given names by Edgar Lee Masters or his typist are apparent when comparisons are made with tombstone information and other Morgan County records and research of several family genealogists. The composition of Thomas' family is given from a combination of these sources:

1. Squire Davis, born November 28, 1812; married Lucinda Wasson March 6, 1834; died February 2, 1904. I have described the circumstances of the marriage in the study of the Wasson family.

2. Polly D. (miswritten as Paul in the birth section of Edgar Lee Masters' transcription), born February 14, 1815; married Hiram H. Lemon in Morgan County about November 8, 1831; died February 22, 1843.

3. James Madison, born April 3, 1817, according to his tombstone and the county history sketch. The poet's transcription says February 14, probably picking up the month and day of Polly's birth incorrectly. He married Rebecca Ann Dinwiddie in Morgan County June 15 or 16, 1841, and died April 3, 1898, his eighty-first birthday.

4. William, died in infancy in Tennessee, 1819.

5. Nancy Officer, born May 20, 1820; married James Watson or Wilson[92] January 7, 1836; death date not located.

6. Sarah McClenahan, born May 19, 1822; married the Rev. William Gannaway August 29, 1839. Death date not located.

7. Susanne, born October 25, 1824; married John Orr in Morgan County February 15, 1843; death date not located. Susanah is the spelling in Morgan County marriage records.[93]

8. Emmeline Jane Summers, born April 12, 1827; married Hercules (spelled "Harclus" in the Bible transcription) McLaughlin in Morgan County December 26, 1844; died July 30, 1845.

9. Thomas Burley, born June 14, 1829. He may have died in youth, since no Thomas is among minor sons listed in the will of the father in 1848. The younger Thomas probably is the male under age five listed in the 1830 federal census of the Thomas Masters household in Morgan County, and one of the four under age ten in the 1835 state census.[94] Or the younger Thomas may have married young and left the household. Morgan County marriage records show a Thomas B. Masters marrying Elizabeth Bowland,

or Berland, in 1847, and a Thomas Masters wedding Mary MaGanis in 1848. The state census of nearby Peoria County in 1855 (page 32) shows a Thomas Masters, born in Tennessee.

10. Robert Milton, born in May 30, 1831; no marriage record discovered. The Bible transcription shows his death as June 14, 1832, which conflicts with the will information showing him alive in 1848, as well as the 1835 census tabulation. The correct death year was probably 1852 or 1882.

11-12. Twins William (the second son so named) Lafayette and Wilbourne J. (often spelled Wilbur), born January 4, 1835. "Thomas' wife had prayed all her married life for twins, and always said these were an answer to prayer," according to descendant of William.[95] He married Cornelia Hesser October, 1856; his death date has not been located. Wilbourne (the tombstone spelling in Jacksonville East Cemetary) died September 7, 1875. The Bible Transcript lists his marriage to Miriam E. Humphrey December 21, 1870. The tombstone inscription with Wilbourne's gives her name as Miriam Masters Hewett, which could indicate a second marriage before her death April 20, 1906.[96]

Only James Madison Masters and Wilbourne J. Masters, among these siblings of his grandfather, appear to have played any part in Edgar Lee Masters' creative use of family lore. Card file indexes of Civil War service by Illinoisians in the state archives indicate that four of Thomas' sons–Thomas, Robert, William L. and Wilbourne–may have seen Civil War service, but only Wilbourne's is plainly documented. He "was a Union soldier and was severely wounded in the battle of Missionary Ridge, so much so that he was invalid until his death in 1876 [sic]," Edgar Lee Masters wrote in *Days in the Lincoln County*.[97] Perhaps the poet had this relative and his injury in mind when, for *Spoon River Anthology*, he wrote the epitaph of the naive country-boy soldier, "Knowlt Hoheimer":

> I was the first fruits of the battle of Missionary Ridge. . .
> And this granite pedestal
> Bearing the worlds, *"Pro Patria."*
> What do they mean, anyway?[98]

The 1917 visit to Morgan County revived for the poet some of the lore about "Uncle Matt," James Madison Masters. Some of it certainly had been conveyed earlier by both the poet's grandfather Squire Davis Masters, and by Hardin Wallace Masters, who visited James Madison Masters' home in Murrayville "approximately about 1859."[99] In 1917, the house, with Murrayville grown around it, was vacant and "in these rooms there was a psychology of terrible dreariness, a feeling and sense of sickness and death." The guide, Arthur Masters, grandson of James Madison Masters, reminded the visitors of how "his grandfather used to sit and smoke" his clay pipes in the house "thirty or more years after his wife died." The old man also would "sit alone and smoke" in the rooms that were kept as they

were when his children were living. "Every one of them died of tuberculosis, no one reaching a much greater age than thirty years," Edgar Lee Masters wrote, with some exaggeration of what was tragic enough.[100] He had, three years before, used the sense of such a death-pervaded dwelling in the dramatic *Spoon River* epitaph, "Nancy Knapp":

> the dreadfulest smells infested the rooms.
> So I set fire to the beds and the old witch-house
> Went up in a roar of flame,
> As I danced in the yard with waving arms,
> While he wept like a freezing steer.[101]

But, with his memory refreshed as to the lore of James Madison Masters, the epitaph "Morgan Oakley," first published in 1923, appears to be a more direct reflection of the great-uncle's stoic acceptance of his losses. The given name is, of course, that of the county where James Madison Masters lived:

> There is a time for vine leaves in the hair,
> And a time for thorns on the brow,
> Even as life is both ecstasy and agony,
> And as Nature grows both leaves and thorns.
> In youth I knew love and victory;
> In age loneliness and pain.
> But life is to be lived neither as leaves,
> Nor as thorns, but through both
> I came to the wisdom of barren boughs,
> And the desolation of unleaved thorns,
> Which remembered the leaves![102]

On the 1917 trip, too, Edgar Lee Masters observed the bleakness of some of the villages that had grown up along the railroad that passed through southern Morgan and Greene counties. In *The Nuptial Flight* the characters Walter Scott Houghton and his wife Fanny, whose antagonisms resemble those of the poet's parents, pass a tense wedding night in a seedy hotel in Roodhouse, an actual village about halfway between White Hall and Manchester.[103]

In the sixteen years he spent in Morgan County after the move from Tennessee, Squire Davis Masters seems to have acted the responsible role of tenant and manager for his father's holdings. I have not located any deed transactions in Squire Davis Masters' own name, except that already described near the time of the father's death. Squire Davis Masters' service in the Black Hawk War and hidden commission as a militia captain—It conflicted with his anti-war sentiments–became part of family lore.[104] Both "Reverdy Clayton" of *Children of the Market Place* and "Squire Atterberry" of Masters' last novel, *The Tide of Time*, had experiences in the campaign

against the Indian chief who refused to leave northern Illinois. In the latter novel, Squire Atterberry's son, Leonard Westerfield Atterberry, is sent on the eve of the Civil War to a small college, "Northern University" in "Charlesville," as Squire Davis Masters sent his sons, Hardin Wallace and Thomas Henry, to Illinois College in Jacksonville. However, Edgar Lee Masters drew most of the color for "Northern University" from his own experiences in 1889-1890 at Knox College in Galesburg.[105]

With little property in his own name in Morgan County, Squire Davis Masters, for all family affection, was really in the position of a hired man with a wife and four children by the mid-1840s. The move to Menard County was "on account of the cheapness of land," his grandson would write.[106] The county also was being populated by other settlers who had Tennessee or Kentucky roots and Democratic Party sentiments, and may have seemed more congenial to Squire Davis Masters than the Whig-dominated Morgan County which "attracted so many Yankees during its early years that by the 1830s it was more New England in character than any other community in the State," according to a regional guide.[107]

Squire Davis Masters purchased 280 acres on Menard County's Sand Ridge in a deed dated June 2, 1846, reserving $267 of the $1,200 payment to be satisfied by delivery of "a good span of horses and a good Waggon" before December 1.[108] Late that year or early in 1847 he brought his family, including his infant Hardin Wallace, who was born September 11, 1845, to the rude cabin on the Menard County land. According to a tradition recounted by the poet, Lucinda wept at the sight, remembering the comforts of her Morgan County Home.[109] Then she and Squire Davis Masters began the nearly sixty years of residence together on Sand Ridge that would be celebrated in the various *Spoon River* epitaphs, including "Lucinda Matlock.":

> I spun, I wove, I kept the house, I nursed the sick,
> I made the garden, and for holiday
> Rambled over the fields where sang the larks,
> And by Spoon River gathering many a shell,
> And many a flower and medicinal weed —
> Shouting to the wooded hills, singing to the green valleys.

With the move to Menard County, perhaps two centuries of frontier pioneering experience ended for the Masters family. The barriers its offspring would face henceforth would be in the complexities of commerce, the law, social development, and intellectual pursuits. It is a logical breaking point for this study, since within another full century would pass the remainder of the lives of the poet's grandparents and parents, and his own life and career. It was in Menard County that the poet first became aware of the rich lore of the lives of his kin and their neighbors. The example to him of those in his family who, with passion, persistence, and grace had

coped with the fundamentals of frontier experience, became a constant point of reference for his writings.

## NOTES

[1]Reactions are summarized by John T. Flanagan, *Edgar Lee Masters: The Spoon River Poet and His Critics* (Metuchen, New Jersey: Scarecrow Press, 1974), pp. 21-35.

[2]Most extensively in his autobiography, *Across Spoon River* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1936), and *The Sangamon* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1942), a volume of the Rivers of America series edited by Stephen Vincent Benet and Carl Carmer.

[3]General biographical information about the poet, unless otherwise credited, is from *Across Spoon River*.

[4]For example, *Across Spoon River*, p. 4, *The Sangamon*, p. 14; *Lincoln: The Man* (New York: Dodd Mead & Company, 1931), p. 1.

[5]Citations from *Spoon River Anthology* are from the expanded edition (New York: MacMillan, 1916); see "Lucinda Matlock," p. 230. My study of the Wasson family, "Ancestral Lore in *Spoon River Anthology: Fact and Fancy*, is in *Papers on Language and Literature*, 20 (Spring, 1984).

[6]"Maryland-Carolina Ancestry of Edgar Lee Masters," *The Great Lakes Review*, 8-9 (Fall 1982-Spring 1983), 51-80.

[7]Sources on the settlement and division of Rowan County include Samuel J. Ervin, Jr., *A Colonial History of Rowan County*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Publications, 1917), and David Leroy Corbitt, *Formation of the North Carolina Counties* Raleigh: North Carolina State Department of Archives and History, 1969).

[8]Robert Jenkins, *The Jenkins Family Book* (Chicago: LaSalle Printing Co., 1904), p. 183.

[9]"Days in the Lincoln Country," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, 18 (1926), p. 779.

[10]*Across Spoon River*, pp. 3-4; "Edgar Lee Masters Pays Visit to Shrine of Andrew Jackson," *Nashville Tennessean*, 3 April 1927, p. 1, p. 5.

[11]P. 26. With some geographical imprecision Masters credited "Virginia" with much of the settlement of the nation beyond New England and the Middle Atlantic states in *The New World* (New York: D. Appleton-Century, 1937), p. 67: "Virginia went south to the Carolinas/And crossing the Blue Ridge/Found the wilds of buffalo in Kentucky and Illinois."

[12]"Maryland-Carolina Ancestry of Edgar Lee Masters."

[13]Ibid., and Adelaide L. Fries, *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, II (Raleigh: North Carolina State Department of Archives and History, 1968), pp. 719-723, p. 742.

[14]Surry County Wills, Book 1, p. 153; Book 3, pp. 11-12. Deed Book C, p. 239; Book I, p. 124; Book Y, p. 291. File of Estate Inventories, Accounts and Settlements, cases nos. 1090, 1115, 1114, 207-A, 277-A. Marriage Bonds, p. 156. I inspected and obtained copies of these

records at the Surry County courthouse in Dobson; there are numerous other indexed references to those Masterses who are mentioned in my text. The 1790 federal census listings for them are on pp. 184-185; in 1800 Nicholas p. 708, and James p. 677.

[15]Summarized in "The Maryland-Carolina Ancestry of Edgar Lee Masters." The grandfather died c. 1776 in Maryland. The presumed father of Notley and Hillery was Robert (d. 1770), also the given name of their great-grandfather (d. 1716). Hillery's sons, it will be noted, included Robert, James and William.

[16]Jenkins, p. 183, mistakenly lists a "Susan —" as Hillery's bride. "Polly" is the name used by Edgar Lee Masters in "Days in the Lincoln County," 779. In 1917, he had discovered a family Bible, to be discussed *post*, listing his great-grandfather Thomas Masters as the "son of Hillery and Polly Masters."

[17]The bond is recorded in Rowan County Marriage Bonds II, p. 296, in the courthouse at Salisbury. A copy of the actual bond was provided by the North Carolina Department of Archives and History, Raleigh.

[18]Mrs. Dero Darwin, Sr., to Robert Eldridge, 8 June 1958. Both the Darwins and Eldridge made their files available for my research in 1971-1972, and added suggestions later. Robert S. Masters died in 1940 at age eighty-nine. The information he gave to his descendants and Edgar Lee Masters indicates a knowledge of Notley's role in the marriage of Hillery and Mary. However, by 1954 when Mrs. Sidney Crockett researched the poet's ancestry in Overton County, the name of Hillery's wife apparently had been forgotten. It is not included in notes she copied from the files of Robert and Oscar Eldridge, grandsons of Robert S. Her research is filed at the Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville. Oscar Eldridge's six-page typescript, "The Masters Family," dated 21 July 1954, does not name Hillery's wife, and says "he came from Wiles County, Virginia." No county by that name has existed in Virginia, North Carolina, or Tennessee; the error was probably a miscopying of Wythe County, Virginia, or possibly nearby Wilkes County, North Carolina.

[19]*Across Spoon River*, p. 4; "Days in the Lincoln Country," p. 779.

[20]Mrs. Crockett was employed by Kimball Flaccus, who planned but never completed a biography of the poet. She reported to him in a letter 13 July 1954 after a visit to Ridley Masters in Overton County: "Got the same story as is generally and traditionally told. . . Namely that the Emigrant was Nottley, his son Hilary came from Wythe Co., Va., after having served in the Rev. War."

[21]Mrs. Buehrig to Charles E. Burgess, 20 May 1982.

[22]Robert O. DeMond, *The Loyalists in North Carolina During the Revolution* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1940), pp. 64-75.

[23]The given names of Masterses active in the Loyalist cause were Henry, Samuel, George and Thomas, according to indexed references in Murtie June Clark's *Loyalists in the Southern Campaign of the Revolutionary War* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1981).

[24]In "John S. Masters," 4-page undated typescript.

[25]E.g. indexed listings in Lyman Chalkley, *Chronicles of the Scotch-Irish Settlement in Virginia*, 3 vols. (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1980 reprint of 1912 edition).

[26]Robert W. Ramsey, *Carolina Cradle: Settlement of the Northwest Carolina Frontier, 1747-1762* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1964), p. 130.

[27]Ervin, p. 31.

[28]Eugene H. Bean, "Rowan County (N.C.) Records. Early Settlers," 9-page photocopy supplied by a genealogical service without publication data. "Morgan Davies" is listed as the bride of John Frohock by bond executed 19 January 1763 in Rowan County Marriage Bonds I, p. 91.

[29]Overton County Deed Book D, pp. 278-279.

[30]Overton County Deed Book B, p. 209.

[31]Netti Scheimer Yantis, *Montgomery County Virginia Tax Lists A B C for the Year 1788* (Springfield, Virginia, n.p., 1972), p. 2, and Yantis, *Montgomery County Virginia–Circa 1790* (Springfield, Virginia, n.p., 1972), p. 9, p. 86, where a notation indicates Hillery appeared in a 1793 Wythe County Tax list.

[32]Hawkins County Deed Book 2, p. 171, p. 282.

[33]Willis Hitcherson, *Tennessee Homesteader & Land Owners* (Kingston [?], Tennessee; n.p., 1964), p. 89.

[34]P. 679.

[35]Oscar Eldridge, "The Masters Family."

[36]Overton County Deed Book F, p. 69. A younger Martin Masters, born in 1810, is listed as age forty and as a son of William Masters in the Overton County census of 1850 (Mrs. Buehrig letters to Charles E. Burgess, 20 May 1982).

[37]The "Carter Bible" information was obtained by Merry Ann Kinkaid Malcolm of Kewanee, Ill., from Norma Luallen of Alexandria, Louisiana, a descendant of Robert's daughter Nancy who married Nathan Carter in Morgan County in 1846. Transcription furnished by Mrs. Buehrig to Charles E. Burgess in letter 31 January 1979. The John S. Masters Bible record, located by Robert Eldridge, also lists 9 March 1793 as Robert's birthdate.

[38]Some researchers have confused several of these children with those of Robert's father Hillery, and brother Thomas. Robert's children, by the best evidence, were Margaret L. 1812-1862, m. Jefferson Goodpasture; Hillery C. 1814-1893, m. Martha Williard; Matilda 1816-?, m. Benjamin Ferguson; Mary c. 1821-?, m. David R. Angelow; Nancy 1822-?, m. Nathan Carter; Davis c. 1825-?, m. Elizabeth Whorton; Robert S. c. 1828-1865, m. Margaret Walker; Sarah c. 1832-?, m. Samuel Frazee; and two unidentified males, born c. 1819 and 1829. The known marriages occured in Morgan County, Illinois, except for Margaret's (probably Overton County in 1831) and Robert S. (Greene County, Illinois).

[39]The year of arrival in Illinois of the Robert Masters family and his death date are given in a sketch of Benjamin Ferguson, *Directory of Morgan County, Illinois: Its Past and Present* (Chicago: Donnelly, Lloyd & Co., 1878), pp. 680-81. Margaret was a great-grandmother of Mrs. Buehrig.

[40]Family sheets and correspondence from Mrs. Buehrig and Robert Eldridge.

[41]Ibid.

[42]Transcript from the Gore family Bible in Darwin papers. In 1958 it was possessed by Miss Carrie Gore of Gainesboro, Tennessee.

[43]Mrs. Wynn to Charles E. Burgess, 23 February 1972 and 29 January 1973; the only son was named Isaac.

[44]"The Masters Family."

[45]The Draper lineage, from a "Geneva Anderson Bible," is transcripted in Jeannette Tillotson Acklen, *Tennessee Records: Bible Records and Marriage Bonds*, II (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1967 reprint of 1933 edition), p. 104.

[46]Family sheets and correspondence from Mrs. Buehrig and Dero Darwin, Jr.

[47]1820 census, p. 19; 1830 census, p. 199.

[48]Robert Eldridge file, from copies provided by Fred Kenneth Masters of Wichita, Kansas. Mary Masters signed by mark, as she did on earlier documents. One portion of the 1838 document spells her late husband's name "Hillery."

[49]Darwin notes dated 30 May 1958.

[50]Robert Eldridge lists Margaret Masters as a daughter of Hillery, but Mary probably would have been past child-bearing age in 1812. Females tabulated in the 1820 and 1830 censuses of the Robert Masters household in Overton County include indviduals of Margaret's approximate age in those years. Darwin lists include as Hillery's daughters a Debbie, Elizabeth who married Jack Kitchens, and Delony who married a George Cain. Dero Darwin, Jr., acknowledges there is no documentation "only a guess by an elderly descendant of Hillery's some years ago" for including Elizabeth and Delony (letter to Charles E. Burgess 4 February 1982). The Gore Bible shows a Deborah, born in 1818, as the daughter of Jesse Masters. The Elizabeth possibly was the wife of Thomas or James Masters. Overton 1850 census reports analyzed by Mrs. Buehrig show a Delony Cain, born in 1806 in Virginia, which was several years after the Hillery Masters family left the state.

[51]Robert Eldridge, "John S. Masters." Isaac came to Illinois in 1868 and married a cousin, Mary Ellen, daughter of Jefferson and Margaret Masters Goodpasture. The Jefferson Goodpasture and Isaac Masters homes, for most of the period of Illinois residence, were near Irish Grove in Menard County (Buehrig correspondence and family sheets). This was a few miles from where Squire Davis Masters settled; Isaac may be the "Uncle Isaac" of *Spoon River's* "The Hill" (p. 2). The Overton County Masterses maintained closer contacts with the Isaac Masters family. As young men, Riley and Grover, sons of Robert S. of Overton County, worked for Isaac and neighboring farmers during summers in Menard County (my interview with Riley Masters, 9 June 1971).

[52]Interviews with Grover and Riley Masters, 9 June 1971 and Ridley Masters, 14 August 1972; Crockett file notes, 10 July 1954; Charles E. Burgess, "Edgar Masters, Author of 'Spoon River Anthology,' Made Pilgrimage Here in 1920's," *Livingston* (Tennessee *(Enterprise*, May 6, 1976, p. 9, p. 17.

[53]Mrs. Buehrig to Charles E. Burgess, 20 May 1982.

[54]"The Masters Family," "John S. Masters" and undated notes in Robert Eldridge file.

[55]Overton County Deed Book B, pp. 314-15.

[56]The deed registered 24 July 1815 in Book B, pp. 316-17, shows that she purchased the sixty acres by proxy through Samuel H. Laughen almost a year before.

[57]William p. 5, Davis p. 6, Jesse p. 9, Thomas and Robert p. 14, Mary and James p. 19.

[58]I photographed the long, two-tined fork in 1971. In 1982 it remained in Livingston in the possession of May Masters, widow of Joseph, youngest son of Robert S. Masters.

[59]"The Masters Family;" interview of 9 June 1971.

[60]The approximate site was pointed out to me 14 August 1972 by Mrs. Robert Eldridge and Oscar Nolen. Mrs. Wynn (letter to Charles E. Burgess, 23 February 1972) described the removal of markers for the dam.

[61]1830, p. 199; 1840, p. 22.

[62]Mrs. Eldridge showed me the site of graves of John, Barbara and Mary Masters, 14 August 1972. Photocopies of the family listings in the John S. Masters Bible (American Bible Society, 1854) were provided in 1971 by its owner, Raymond Masters of Smithville, Tennessee.

[63]"A History of Hillary Masters and Family," undated three-page typescript of Robert Eldridge; the petition is printed in full in Robert L. and Mary Eldridge, *Bicentennial Echoes of the History of Overton County Tennessee 1776-1976* (Livingston: Enterprise Printing Co., 1976), pp. 31-32.

[64]Undocumented note in Robert Eldridge file; the award probably was for militia service.

[65]Overton County Deed Book F, pp. 69-70 and pp. 166-167. Thomas Masters' jury duty in 1820 is recorded in Overton County Reference Docket 1818-1822, p. 268.

[66]Interview 9 June 1971. The spring in August, 1972, was on land owned by Perry Wendl and was probably little changed in 150 years except for addition of a pipe system used to feed a nearby recreational lake. I was led to the spring by a neighborhood youth, Lloyd Greenwood.

[67]*Across Spoon River*, p. 18, pp. 43-4.

[68]P. 228.

[69]*The History of Menard and Mason Counties, Illinois* (Chicago: O.L. Baskin & Co., 1879), p. 747.

[70]*The Sangamon*, p. 26.

[71]Overton County Deed Book E, p. 89

[72]Masters, "Record of the Trip to Morgan County Illinois, October 5, 1917," ten-page typescript in the Masters Collection, University of Texas at Austin.

[73]*Spoon River Anthology*, pp. 230-231; *The New Spoon River* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1924), p. 93, p. 97.

[74]Some researchers believe Charles, prominent in Overton County c. 1807-1819, was the father of Elizabeth Matlock Masters. However, his 1819 will, probated in 1831, gives his own wife's name as Elizabeth but no Elizabeth is listed among his five daughters; Overton County Deed Book F, pp. 185-86, 233-34. Overton's 1820 census lists Elizabeth Matlock (p. 14) as sixteen to twenty-six, head of a household with four females under ten.

[75]Grainger County Deed Book A, p. 20; Charles E. Burgess, "Masters-Matlock," *They Multiplied: A Story of the Matlocks-Medlocks*, I (Autumn 1974), 131-33, with notes 134-35 by the editor, Mrs. Jess Armstrong.

[76]Mrs. Wood on 17 February 1974 and Mrs. Armstrong, December 1976 in letters to Charles E. Burgess suggest a probable, though not certain progression: Immigrant John Matlock died in 1718 in New Kent County, Virginia, wife Margaret died 1718. Son William, born 1702, resided Goochland and Albemarle counties, Virginia, wife Elizabeth died 1767; their son William, born 1734, married Beulah Rice, daughter of William and Hannah Graves

Rice. This William died in Bedford County, Virginia, c. 1768. Among the children of William and Beulah were John and Charles Matlock of Grainger County, Tennessee, formerly of Botecourt County, Virginia. The complex documentation on these individuals is in various issues of *They Multiplied*.

[77]Age ranges of twenty-six to forty-five for the oldest male and sixteen to twenty-six for the oldest female in the household are consistent with the documented birth dates for Thomas and Elizabeth.

[78]Interview 14 August 1972.

[79]William F. Short, "History of Morgan County," in *Historical Encyclopedia of Illinois and History of Morgan County*, eds Newton Bateman and Paul Selby (Chicago: Munsell, 1906), pp. 883-84. Morgan County Marriage Book A, 1828-1837, p. 1, shows an Elizabeth Masters licensed to wed Josiah Smith, 10 March 1828.

[80]Profile of Robert L. Masters, a son of James Madison Masters, *History of Morgan County, Illinois* (Chicago: Donnelly, Loyd & Co., 1878), p. 608.

[81]*The Nuptial Flight* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1923), pp. 1-3

[82]The Boone family resided in Rowan County, North Carolina, in some of the same years when the poet's Masters and Wasson ancestors were there.

[83]Short, p. 833.

[84]*Children of the Market Place* (New York: MacMillan, 1922), p. 32.

[85]"Days in the Lincoln Country," 780; Charles Henry Rammelkamp, *Illinois College: A Centennial History 1829-1929* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1928), pp. 39, 554.

[86]Morgan County Deed Record Book C, p. 101; Morgan County Land Book No. 1, p. 133; on the same page a "P. Masters," possibly Thomas' daughter Polly, who would marry in 1831, is listed as acquiring forty acres in Section 13N, Range 11W on 14 December 1830.

[87]My interview with Edith Masters, cousin of Edgar Lee Masters, in Petersburg, Illinois, 10 April 1970; interview with Cloyd Perce, a former neighbor of Arthur Masters, in Murrayville, 15 June 1971. For a perspective on landholdings of the Masters family, see plat maps in *Atlas Map of Morgan County, Illinois* (Davenport, Iowa: Andreas, Lyten, 1872), p. 32.

[88]*Across Spoon River*, p. 4; Thomas Masters estate file, Morgan County courthouse, Jacksonville.

[89]Deed Book Z, p. 91.

[90]"Days in the Lincoln Country," 784, correctly giving the death year of Thomas as 1849.

[91]He served a Jacksonville parish as late as the 1860's:"John Edward Young 1859-1866," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, 26 (1933), 107; "Directory of Morgan County. . .," p. 375.

[92]The Bible transcript says Watson; the Morgan County Marriage Record Index Book B, p. 38, says Wilson as does Mrs. J.N. Masters, whose husband was a descendant of Nancy's brother William L., in a letter 14 March 1943 to Robert Eldridge. The unusual middle names for Nancy, Sarah, and Emmeline are as recorded in the Bible transcript.

[93]"Morgan County, Ill., Marriages, Book A 1828-1837 - Book B 1837-1860," typescript in the Illinois State Historical Society Library, Springfield, p. 36. Other Masters marriages were

checked in this or the original index at the courthouse in Jacksonville.

[94]Federal census, p. 118, state census, p. 99. An unidentified male, age twenty to thirty, was in the 1830 household but apparently had departed by 1835.

[95]Mrs. J.N. Masters to Robert Eldridge, 14 March 1943.

[96]Wilbur Edgar Masters apparently was the son of Wilbourne. The entries for the father (Wilbur J. in the Bible transcript) are the last by date. The entries probably were made by his wife, Miriam.

[97]P. 788. The battle, fought 23-24 November 1863, did not result in injury sufficient for discharge for Wilbourne. Military records of Company E, 8th Illinois Infantry, show him reenlisting 5 January 1864 and mustered out as a corporal 4 May 1866: J.N. Reece, *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Illinois*, I (Springfield: Phillips Bros.,1900), p. 404-7. Formation of the company began in Peoria County in April, 1861; Wilbourne enlisted 25 July 1861 while it was encamped for training near Springfield. See James M. Rice, *Peoria City and County*, I (Chicago: S.J. Clarke, 1912), p. 215, roster carrying Wilbourne's name as "William J."

[98]P. 27.

[99]"Record of the Trip to Morgan County Illinois." Edgar Lee Masters at age twenty had visited, with his parents, the home of Jacksonville in 1888 of Squire Davis Masters, son of James Madison Masters, according to the document.

[100]Ibid. The tombstone in Bethel Cemetary shows James Madison Masters' wife, Rebecca, died 25 February 1873, age 55. Tombstone inscriptions there and at other Morgan County cemeteries show only Squire Davis (8 August 1848 - 29 March 1904) surviving beyond thirty. The others located; William T., 23 June 1842 - 20 October 1865; John Henry, 12 January 1844 - 12 July 1845; James D., 8 March 1846 - 17 October 1872; Mary Elizabeth, 15 March 1851 - 5 March 1880; Robert Lafayette, 20 March 1854 - 7 June 1880; Annie L., 8 February 1856 - 25 December 1874; and Edwin M., 4 October 1859 - 6 April 1882.

[101]P. 78.

[102]"The New Spoon River," *Vanity Fair*, 20 (July, 1923), 45, 110; also in the collected 1924 volume, p. 144.

[103]*The Nuptial Flight*, p. 88-95.

[104]"Days in the Lincoln Country," pp. 780, 787. Squire Davis Masters enlisted from Morgan County, 30 April 1832, at age nineteen on the muster role of Captain William Gillham and was attached to the First Regiment, Third Brigade, commanded by Brigadier General James D. Henry: Ellen Whitney, *The Black Hawk War: Vol. I, Illinois Volunteers* (Springfield: Illinois State Library, 1970), pp. 366-67. The frequently anthologized "Achilles Deatheridge" from Masters' *The Great Valley* (New York: MacMillan, 1917), p. 93, must have been based on the name of an acquaintance of Squire Davis Masters in the early Morgan County years although the poem concerns a Civil War incident. The tombstone of Black Hawk War veteran Achilles Deatheridge is in Rogers Cemetery, Waverly, in Morgan County, *Waverly Journal*, April 8, 1983. In the poem, Achilles, who challenges Gen. Grant while on sentry duty, is "sixteen past" and from "Athens, Illinois," a Menard County village.

[105]*Across Spoon River*, pp. 109-120; *The Tide of Time* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1937), p. 11, pp. 213-14. Hardin Wallace Masters was in the preparatory department at Illinois College in 1862-1863; *Catalogue of the Officers and Students at Illinois College for the*

*Academic Year 1862-1863* (Jacksonville: Journal Job Office, 1862), p. 8. He remained only a year or less. Other catalogues and alumni lists consulted at the Illinois College Library show Hardin's brother, Thomas Henry, attended 1860-1861; of James Madison Masters' sons, William T. 1860-1861 and taught Latin 1864-1865; James D. 1863-1864 and the following year when he also is listed as a "tutor;" both Squire Davis and James were enrolled 1865-66.

[106]"Days in the Lincoln Country," p. 780.

[107]*Illinois: A Descriptive and Historical Guide* (Chicago: A.C. McClurg, 1939), p. 482.

[108]Menard County Deed Book 3, pp. 65-66. An analysis of Squire Davis Masters' early land transactions in the county is in "Days in the Lincoln Country."

[109]Masters, "I Call Her Dorcas." *The Rotarian*, 62 (May 1943), p. 8-9.

# WIND ENGINES IN WESTERN ILLINOIS

Russell G. Swenson

Wind engines, or windmills, as they are popularly known, have been in use in western Illinois since 1870. Their main use has been to pump water on farms and in towns. This study focuses on the occurrence and uses of windmills in twenty-seven counties of the western Illinois region (Figure 1). Illustrated atlases from the 1870s and aerial atlases of the 1950s provide a glimpse of the growth and decline of the windmill numbers in the region. Interviews with farmers supplement the data compiled from these pictorial sources.

The main contribution of this machine has been in pumping water, but an alternative use of the wind engine, which the name "windmill" implies, is to grind grain or perform other chores on a limited scale. This alternative use of a wind engine was probably not common in this region. The advent of rural electrification by the 1930s ended the widespread dependence on wind engines, as electric motors replaced the less reliable wind energy. Small-scale, ornamental windmills appear widely in the region today, and their display recalls the romantic appeal of their full-size, water-pumping forerunners.

## THE NATURE OF THE MACHINES

A large market for windmills existed in the United States after the Civil War. Agricultural machines had relieved labor shortages in the northern states during the war, and windmills were another element in the mechanization of repetitive tasks. Most windmills on farms pumped water for livestock, even though water could also be stored and piped to a farm house or to a house in a small town. Irrigation on a small scale could also be done. In response to the demand, a large number of patents were issued for increasingly efficient windmill designs before, during, and after the war. A further response to the windmill market was the proliferation of manufacturers in Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin in the 1870s, along with the early relocation of the pre-eminent Halladay company from Connecticut to Illinois in 1863.[1]

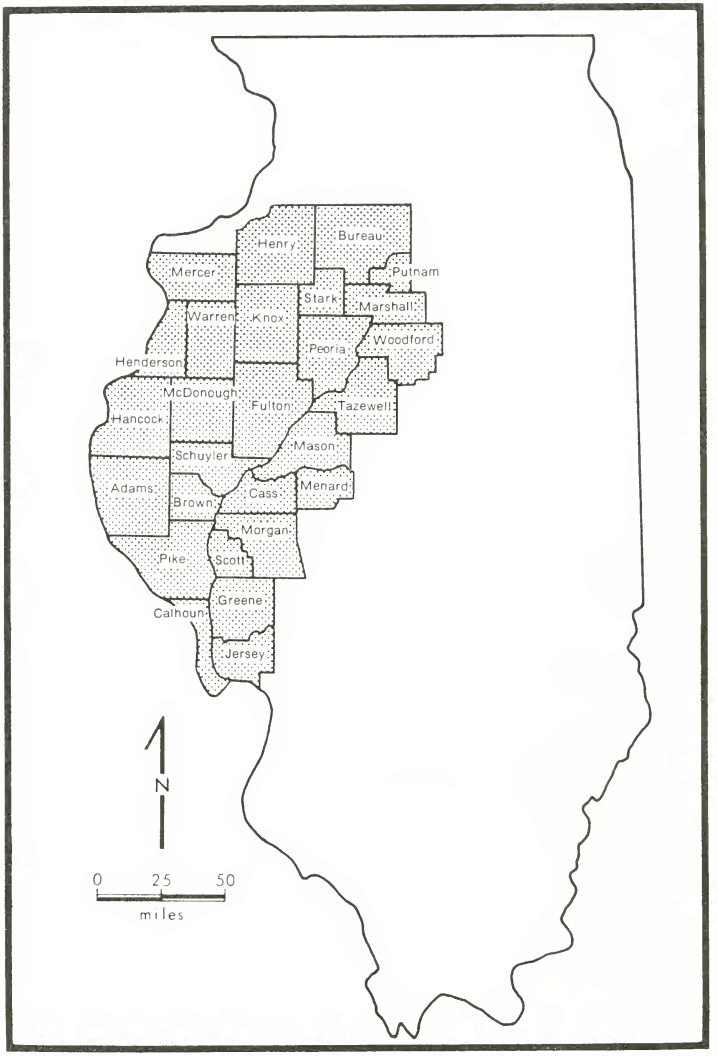



**Figure 1**

*Western Illinois counties included in this study.*

The water-lifting windmill of the United States evolved from the European type of grist mill, which was built along the Atlantic coast of New York and New Jersey early in the seventeenth century. European-style grist mills operated on flat land near the ocean where water-powered mills were precluded. In 1854 Daniel Halladay, a mechanic in Ellington, Connecticut, developed the prototype of the American windmill. This machine differed from its European relative in having an open, wood-frame tower, rather than an enclosed and substantial building at its base. Further, Halladay's mill was designed to lift water rather than to grind grain. Rather than being revolutionary, his idea represented a further evolution of the brine pump windmill which had been in use since the Revolutionary War to lift sea water to salt works. Halladay's contributions lay in making his mill self-adjusting to changes in wind direction and self-governing in speed of operation.[2]

Later modifications of the American windmill included governing and self-lubrication mechanisms; iron, then steel, towers and wheels; and by 1888, manufacture with zinc-coated (galvanized) steel. Several of these modifications were developed by Illinois windmill firms.[3] Both wooden and steel wheels were commonly used through the 1870s and 1880s, and towers were often of wood and homemade until early in the twentieth century. The machines were available through local retail outlets and could also be purchased directly from manufacturers.

As late as the 1960s, some individuals in western Illinois were still engaged in the business of oiling and repairing windmills.[4] By this time, however, more business activity in the region was directed at manufacturing and selling ornamental, rather than working, windmills for both a rural and urban market. A span of eighty years, from 1870 to 1950, encompassed the introduction of functional windmills to western Illinois and saw their widespread use.

## WINDMILLS APPEAR AND FLOURISH

The first mention of a windmill in the *Prairie Farmer* was in 1859, when engravings and accompanying stories began to appear. Other widely circulating farm magazines also carried ads for patented windmills by the late 1860s. Several manufacturers vied for space in these magazines in the 1870s, at a time when a new advertising account would encourage the publisher to print a feature article on the newly available wind engine.[5]

If a person was convinced to buy a manufactured windmill by a magazine ad, or more likely, by a neighbor's good experience with one, he could expect to pay from forty-five to one hundred dollars. If a tower were also purchased, the price would rise by another fifty dollars. Large "power" windmills, with sixteen-foot wheels and gearing for chores such as grinding grain or sawing wood, cost at least $350 in the 1870s.[6]

The decision to buy a windmill could be justified in a number of ways. With increasing numbers of livestock in the counties of the Military Tract

during the 1870s, windmills could help guarantee water at the right time and at the right place on a farm.[7] Pumping water by hand from even a shallow well was a laborious task, when many livestock had to be watered. In the farm magazines of the 1870s, there was often mention of "harnessing the power of the wind" to the benefit of husbandry, and no doubt the idea of taking advantage of this free source of energy was appealing. Recounting the story of his parents' life on a Kansas homestead of the 1880s, John Ise presents the following intricate justification for buying a one hundred-dollar windmill:

> "Oh, it would be fine if it would really pay. Sometimes we draw water when we wouldn't be doing anything else that counts; but sometimes the hired hand does it, and that costs money, right out of our pockets. We wouldn't need to hire so much, would we, if we had a windmill?"
>
> Rosie's eyes lighted up with genuine enthusiasm as she saw a possibility of release from the chore of drawing water—release that could be justified financially.
>
> "And if we didn't have to hire so much," she continued, "we wouldn't need to spend quite so much for sugar and coffee and stuff. We always have to cook more when we have a hand. Just how would all that balance up?"
>
> Rosie got a pencil and a piece of paper, and with Henry's expert help made rough calculations of interest and principal, against savings in labor and food; and she was finally convinced that the windmill would at least be no extravagance.[8]

Residents of western Illinois could count on sufficient winds to power their machines, as this part of the state shares with the Central Plains a high average wind speed, coupled with relatively high wind-energy potential. Further, back-gearing, which allows several revolutions of the wheel for one stroke of the pump, appeared by the 1880s. This innovation allowed windmills to lift water even in light winds.[9]

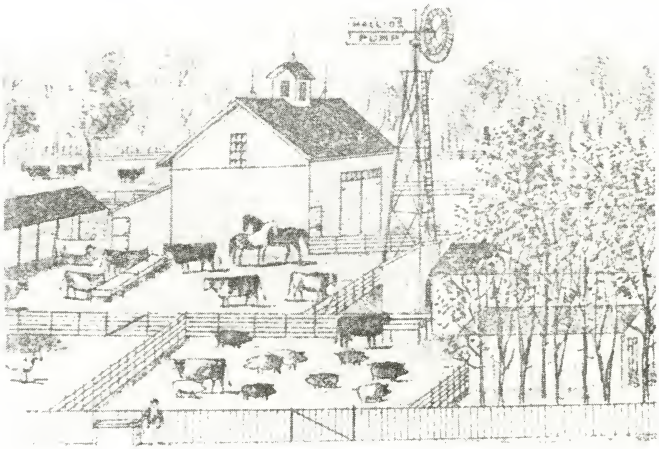
Windmills were erected in towns by the 1870s, but for different reasons than on farms. These machines were used to supply water to small-scale factories and for dooryard gardens. A windmill which watered a garden in the summer could also pump water to an elevated storage tank and provide running water and an indoor bathroom for the lucky residents. A windmill could be a ticket to higher social status.[10] By 1870, at least two windmills were operating in Galesburg, and a Halladay windmill supplied running water for the Vishnu Springs resort in McDonough County in 1889.[11] Small towns which lacked a municipal water supply, and which therefore could not support indoor plumbing facilities, were especially likely to sprout copies of this machine.

Still another justification applied to both farmers and townsmen. Surface water was generally available in the region, especially in the poorly drained

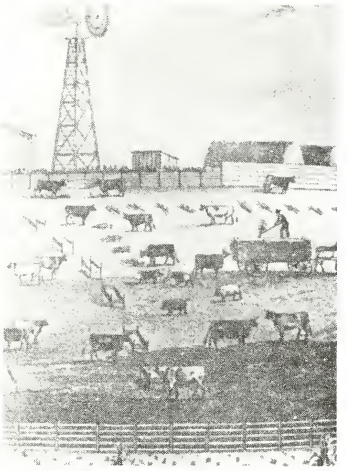
THE HALLADAY STANDARD WIND-MILL.

From Robert L. Ardrey, *American Agricultural Implements,* New York, Arno Press, 1972, p. 140 (reprint of the 1894 edition).

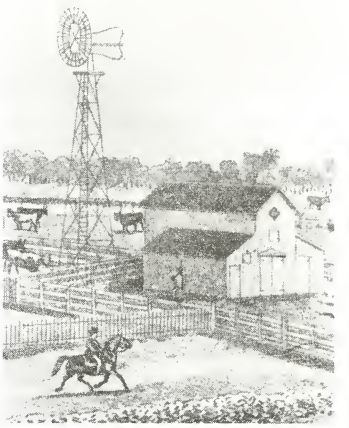
A power windmill, probably used for sawing marble, in Henry County, 1875.



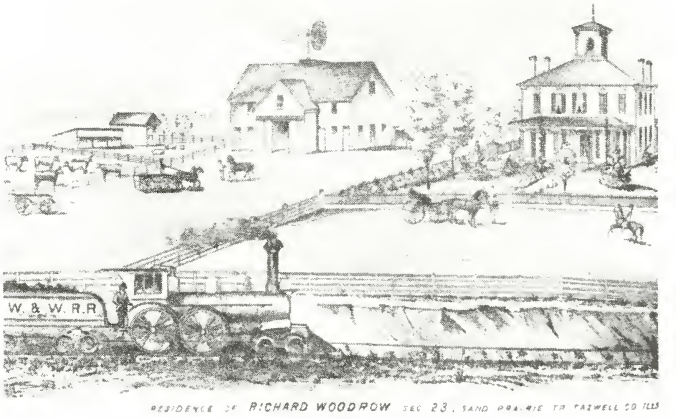

A Halladay windmill head on what is likely a homemade tower, Henry County, 1875.



A busy farm scene, typical of the views presented in illustrated atlases. This scene is in Henry County, 1875. The tower is evidently of wood.

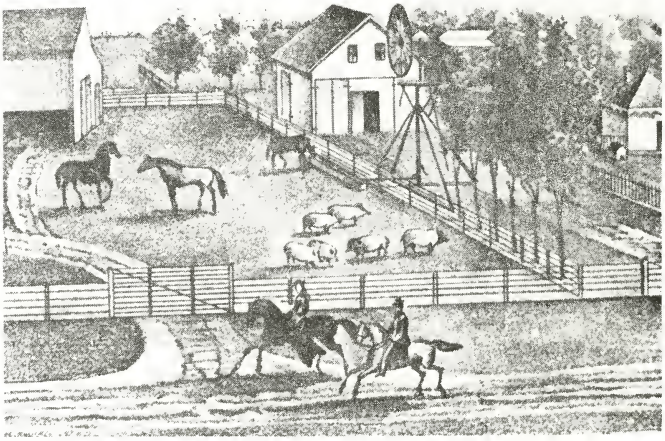


This view from the 1875 atlas of Henry County shows an early metal tower.

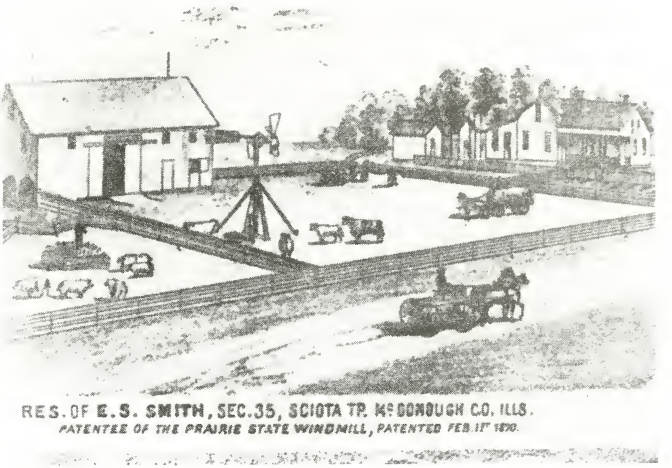



A "power" windmill mounted on a barn, Tazewell County, 1873.

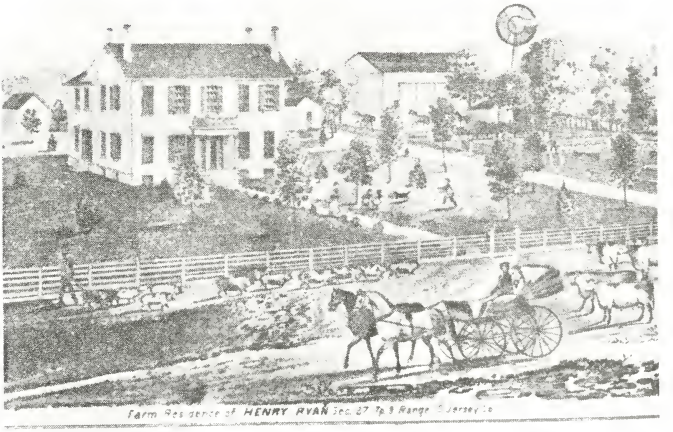
A windmill with storage tank in Pekin, 1873. The windmill probably irrigated the garden and supplied the house with running water.



A short windmill in Tazewell County, 1873. A hand pump and water trough can be seen.

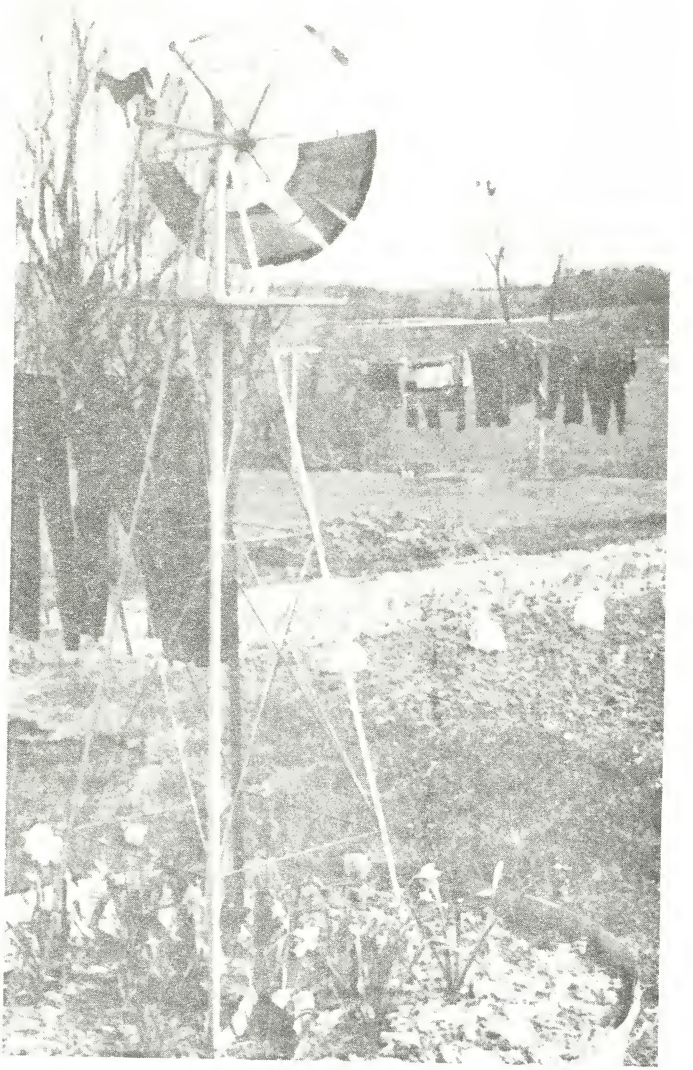



A view of a homemade, patented windmill on a farm in McDonough County from *Atlas Map of McDonough County,* 1871.




A "power" windmill on a farm in Jersey County, 1872.

A twenty-foot working windmill on a farm in McDonough County. This mill was recently moved to a roadside location, where it serves an ornamental function. The head is thought to be seventy-five years old, and it has been painted in bright colors.



An ornamental windmill, with an old working windmill in background, Good Hope, Illinois.

glaciated areas. Nonetheless, a windmill could provide uncontaminated water, whether from a shallow, thirty-foot, or much deeper well. Wells became popular in part because a prevailing hypothesis linked one's drinking surface water with subsequent development of "the shakes" or malarial fever.[12] Though hand dug or driven wells without a wind-powered pump might have supplied uncontaminated water for household uses, the urge to make use of power "as free as the wind" probably contributed to the adoption of the windmill even for preexisting hand dug wells.

Homemade windmills were common in the 1870s. They had the great advantage of low cost. A windmill head could be made of appropriately shaped boards, and power could be transmitted to the pump by gears pirated from other machines. By 1871, a homemade windmill in McDonough County had been patented.[13] Later, homemade windmills became common in the Plains states. In Nebraska, along the Platte River, where wells are shallow, homemade windmills were abundant.[14]

Illustrated atlases make it possible to gauge the level of windmill adoption in western Illinois in the early 1870s. Early atlases with lithographed sketches of farms, businesses, town and suburban residences exist for nineteen of the twenty-seven counties in this study of western Illinois. The views drawn by itinerant artists are panoramic, encompassing whole farmsteads, and often some surrounding fields as well.[15] The western Illinois atlases each contain an average of fifty-eight views.

Because many views present idyllic, adorned, and well-ordered scenes, it is commonly thought that their accuracy is questionable. On the contrary, by comparing sketches with existent farmsteads, the author has found that the atlases faithfully represent landscapes, and the major structures, including windmills, that dominate them. In the western Illinois atlases, all of which were published between 1870 and 1875, windmill adoption rates are highest in the northern counties (Table 1). This pattern coincides with the location of livestock concentrations by 1870, which were predominantly in the prairie counties of the northern Military Tract.[16]

After 1870, livestock numbers grew rapidly throughout western Illinois. The decline of corn and wheat prices, accompanying economic depression in the 1870s, led to an increase in the importance of marketable livestock which could consume grain. This development was undoubtedly propitious for the adoption of windmills, as their main use was in pumping water for livestock. Bogue notes that by the late 1860s, windmills were attracting the attention of Illinois farmers, but were still considered expensive.[17] Expensive or not, several manufacturers were in business in Illinois by 1870. For example, the Woodmanse Windmill and Pump factory of Freeport was founded in 1868; and the even more popular Halladay mill was produced at Batavia from the mid-1860s. By 1880, Illinois had more windmill manufacturers than any other state—twenty-three of the nation's total of sixty-nine (Table 2).[18]

There appears to be no alternative to relying on first-hand accounts by

## TABLE 1

## FARMS WITH WINDMILLS IN ILLINOIS

| County | 1870-75 Atlases Windmills | Views | % w/Windmills | 1955 Drury Atlases % w/Windmills[1] |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Adams | 0 | 105 | 0 | 5 |
| Brown | - | - | * | 2 |
| Bureau | 30 | 79 | 38 | 18 |
| Cass | 0 | 27 | 0 | 3 |
| Fulton | 1 | 88 | 1 | 8 |
| Hancock | 5 | 44 | 11 | 10 |
| Henry | 35 | 68 | 51 | 8 |
| Jersey | 1 | 43 | 2 | * |
| Knox | 6 | 102 | 6 | 11 |
| McDonough | 1 | 77 | 1 | 5 |
| Mason | 7 | 35 | 20 | 11 |
| Menard | 4 | 34 | 12 | 7 |
| Morgan | 3 | 55 | 5 | * |
| Peoria | 5 | 97 | 5 | 8 |
| Pike | 1 | 63 | 2 | 5 |
| Schuyler | 0 | 26 | 0 | 5 |
| Scott | 2 | 18 | 11 | * |
| Stark | 9 | 42 | 21 | 17 |
| Tazewell | 7 | 89 | 8 | 9 |
| Woodford | 5 | 12 | 42 | 15 |

Sources: Illustrated atlases by various companies published from 1870 through 1875. Available as part of the Microfilm Collection of County and Regional History of the "Old Northwest," Series 4, Illinois. Also, the American Aerial County History Series for Illinois, by John Drury, which has identical volume titles, except for the county's name. For example: *This Is Adams County, Illinois* (Chicago: The Loree Company, 1955).

* No atlas published.

[1]Based on visual examination of a sample of 300 farmstead photographs in each atlas.

## TABLE 2
## MANUFACTURERS OF WINDMILLS IN ILLINOIS[1]

| Name of Company | Town | Date of First Manufacture | Name(s) of Product(s) |
|---|---|---|---|
| U.S. Wind Engine and Pump Co. | Batavia | 1863 | Halladay; U.S. Solid Wheel; Gem Steel Wind Engine |
| Challenge Windmill and Feed Mill Co. (earlier Challenge Mill Co.; later Challenge Co.) | Batavia | - | Challenge; Dandy; Daisy |
| Appleton Manufacturing Co. | Batavia | - | Goodhue |
| Nichols Manufacturing Co. | Batavia | - | Nichol's Standard Centennial |
| Woodmanse and Hewitt Mfg. Co. (later Woodmanse Mfg. Co.) | Freeport | 1872 | Woodmanse |
| Arcade Co. | Freeport | 1868 | – |
| W.P. Emmert Windmill Co. (later Emmert & Lamp) | Freeport | 1873[2] | Emmert |
| Stover Mfg. & Engine Co. (earlier Stover Mfg. Co.) | Freeport | 1880 | Samson |
| Elgin Wind Power and Pump Co. (later Elgin Windmill Co.) | Elgin | 1882 | Elgin; Wonder; Hummer; Standard Vaneless |
| C.A. Stiles and Co. | Freeport | - | – |
| Aermotor Co. | Chicago | 1888 | Aermotor |
| Fairbanks, Morse and Co. | Chicago | - | Eclipse |
| May Windmill & Supply Co. (earlier May Brothers) | Galesburg | - | Yellow Star |

## TABLE 2 (Continued)

| Name of Company | Town | Date of First Manufacture | Name(s) of Product(s) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Star Manufacturing Co. | Carpentersville | 1890[2] | Butler; Silver Star |
| Wistrand Mfg. Co. | Galva | 1910[2] | Blue Star |
| Marseilles Mfg. Co. | Marseilles | - | Adams |
| Frank Ward (Ward Pump Co.) | Rockford | - | – |
| Sandwich Enterprise Co. | Sandwich | - | – |
| Leander Leach (Leach Windmill Co.) | Joliet | - | – |
| American Well Works | Aurora | - | – |
| Powell and Douglas | Waukegan | - | – |

[1]Compiled by the author from various sources, with assistance from T. Lindsay Baker.
[2]Approximate date.

"old-timers" to determine the degree to which windmills flourished on farms in western Illinois. Interviews with two individuals suggest that "at least half" to "nearly all" farms in the region sported windmills early in the twentieth century.[19] By 1955, however, the number of these impressive machines on farms had declined to a level lower than that of the early 1870s (Table 1).

## DISMANTLING OF WINDMILLS

The diffusion of electrical power in the United States placed windmills on a short road to oblivion. Windmills had been supplanted in towns early in the twentieth century by a combination of electrical service and public water supply systems. Electrical transmission lines were extended to farms on the periphery of small towns in western Illinois by 1930. In 1936, the passage of the Rural Electrification Act initiated the connection of even very isolated farmsteads to the power grid. The connections progressed quickly, interrupted somewhat by World War II. By 1952, over eighty percent of all farms in the United States had electric power.[20] In western Illinois, a large share of farms were connected in the late 1940s.[21]

In retrospect, windmills did not necessarily have to disappear at a dramatic rate because of rural electrification, but they did so nevertheless. Granted that a television antenna was not commonly found on a farm by 1950, so that a windmill tower could serve as a handy support (as many remaining towers now do), there seem to be two arguments for leaving a windmill intact, even if an electric motor is used to drive the water pump. First, if towers are left to stand, the job of seasonally "pulling the pump" to lower the water level in the well pipe to prevent freezing would be facilitated, as the tower could support a pulley to anchor a block and tackle. Second, a tower could support a dooryard electrical light (again, as many remaining towers now do). These were not reasons enough, though, as windmill heads and towers alike were dismantled at a high rate until the mid-1950s.

In the mid-1950s, the American Aerial Survey series of atlases by John Drury showed that few windmills remained on the farms of western Illinois. These atleses feature oblique aerial photographs of nearly all farms in a county, at a scale large enough to allow an assessment of major farmstead structures. Unfortunately, many farmsteads are partially hidden by trees, and some photographs are blurred. In corroboration of these somewhat suspect visual data from Drury's atlases, only 10,000 windmills were sold by manufacturers in the United States in 1956, versus 99,000 units in 1929.[22] The windmill was well on its way to oblivion. They have not yet disappeared completely, though, as a field survey by the author in 1982 revealed. In that year, seven percent of farms in Pike County had working windmills; in McDonough County, five percent; and in Stark County, twelve percent.

## ORNAMENTAL WINDMILLS

Hardly had these majestic, large-scale machines been dismantled when, quietly, they returned in non-functional, ornamental form. Today, farms and towns of western Illinois are frequently decorated with small, ornamental windmills. In 1961, a major manufacturer of working windmills in Nebraska ceased operation. Just before closing, however, it produced a run of "mini-mills"—one of the forerunners of the now-widely manufactured ornamental windmill.[23] Kermit Hart of Bushnell, Illinois, made and sold over 250 four-foot ornamental windmills between 1970 and 1975. Most of his homemade products were sold locally.

The ornamental windmill appears in some concentration in the smaller communities of the region, where many retired farmers and the sons and daughters of farmers have acquired them as a relatively expensive memento. Owners often paint the small machines; a measure which, surprisingly, was also taken by at least some nineteenth-century owners of large, working windmills.[24]

## EPILOGUE

The memory of the working windmill is preserved by its ornamental relative. But is there a possibility of its rising again, phoenix-like, from the scrap pile? If there is a working wind engine in the future of western Illinois, this machine will enjoy poetic revenge upon its arch-enemy, the centralized supply of electrical energy. It will be an electricity-generating turbine, mounted, perhaps, on a windmill-like tower. Wind-powered generators were a common feature of rural America from the 1930s until the full extension of rural electrification. Storage batteries powered radios, small electrical appliances, and an occasional light bulb. Thus, the concept of wind-powered electrical generation is not a new one to farmers. Current experimentation with efficient production of electricity from wind generators contains a promise of the wind engine's return. A resurgence of the number of water-pumping windmills is also not quite beyond belief, as aficionados continue to suggest.[25] Manufacturers still survive in Illinois, Kansas, Nebraska, and Ohio.

## NOTES

[1]A. Clyde Eide, "Free as the Wind," *Nebraska History*, 51 (1970), 25-47.

[2]Terry G. Jordan, "Evolution of the American Windmill: A Study in Diffusion and Modification," *Pioneer America*, 5 (July, 1973), 3-12, and T. Lindsay Baker, Curator Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum, Canyon, Texas, personal correspondence.

[3]Robert L. Ardrey, *American Agricultural Implements* (New York: Arno Press, 1972; reprinted from the 1894 edition, published by the author in Chicago), pp. 155-56; Volta Torrey, *Wind-Catchers* (Brattleboro, Vermont: The Stephen Greene Press, 1976), pp. 104-113; T. Lindsay Baker, "Turbine-Type Windmills of the Great Plains and Midwest," *Agricultural History*, 54 (1980), 38-51.

[4]Interview with C.J. Bradford, McDonough County farmer.

[5]*Prairie Farmer,* illustration inside front cover of index to vol. 4 (July-December, 1859); also 5 (February 23, 1860), p. 11; 5 (March 22, 1860), p. 180; 13 (May 7, 1864), p. 328; and "Morgan's Portable Mill," illustrated in 43 (April 6, 1872), p. 105; advertised in 43 (May 7, 1864), p. 328. Also see *Kansas Farmer,* 10 (August 1, 1873), 240.

[6]The editors of *The Country Gentleman*, 3 (November 6, 1856), 304, reported that the smallest size Haliaday mill sold for seventy-five dollars. E.E. Garfield, "Twenty Years with Windmills," *The Cultivator and Country Gentleman* 54 (March 28, 1889), 245, of Kane County, Illinois, declared that his first windmill was purchased in 1869 for forty-five dollars. See *Prairie Farmer*, 46 (August 14, 1875), 257, for the price of a power windmill.

[7]Theodore L. Carlson, *The Illinois Military Tract* (New York: The Arno Press, 1979; reprinted from the University of Illinois Press edition of 1951), pp. 134-35.

[8]John Ise, *Sod and Stubble* (Lincoln: The University of Nebraska Press, 1967), pp. 196-97.

[9]Roger Hamilton, "Can We Harness the Wind," *National Geographic* 148 (1975), 819; Baker, op. cit., p. 46.

[10]Eide, op. cit., pp. 30-31, Torrey, op. cit., p. 97.

[11]Andreas Lyter and Company, *Atlas Map of Knox County, Illinois* (Davenport, Iowa: Andreas Lyter and Company, 1870); John Hallwas, "The Village That Hicks Built," *Macomb Sunday Journal*, (November 21, 1982), sec. 1, p. 5.

[12]M.A. Barber, "The History of Malaria in the United States, *Public Health Reports* 44 (1929), 2582, 2584.

[13]Andreas Lyter and Company, *Atlas Map of McDonough County, Illinois* (Davenport, Iowa: Andreas Lyter and Company, 1871), p. 21.

[14]Erwin Hinckley Barbour, "Wells and Windmills in Nebraska," *Water Supply and Irrigation Papers of the U.S. Geological Survey,* No. 29 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1899), pp. 35-78.

[15]Microfilm copies of these atlases are available at the Western Illinois University Library. They are part of the Microfilm Collection of County and Regional History of the "Old Northwest," Series 4, Illinois.

[16]Carlson, op. cit., p. 135.

[17]Allan G. Bogue, *From Prairie to Cornbelt* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1963), p. 70.

[18]U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Tenth Census of the U.S., 1880: Manufactures,* House of Representatives Miscellaneous Document 42 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1883).

[19]C.J. Bradford and Donald Lantz, McDonough County farmers.

[20]Marquis Childs, *The Farmer Takes a Hand* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1952), p. 11.

[21]Interview with Robert Pendell, manager of McDonough Power Cooperative.

[22]U.S. Department of Commerce, *Facts for Industry,* Series M31B-86 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1957), p. 3; and U.S. Department of Commerce, *Manufacturers, 1929 Industry Series: Agricultural Implements* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1932), p. 1113.

[23] Eide, op. cit., p. 43.

[24]Russell G. Swenson, "The Windmill Moves to Town, or Small is Beautiful," *Bulletin of the Illinois Geographical Society* 23 (Spring, 1981), 31-40.

[25]Gary Hirshberg, *The New Alchemy Water-Pumping Windmill Book* (Andover, Massachusetts: Brick House Publishing Company, 1982), p. 13.

# NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

### Historical Publications: Bibliography of Adams County

This bibliography is the fourth in the series started in the Spring of 1981. Thus far, Fulton, Mercer, Henderson, Calhoun and Pike counties have been featured. Entries consist of separately published monographs, pamphlets, typescripts which were duplicated for limited private distribution, and maps. The bibliographies do not include periodical or newpaper articles, scrapbooks, manuscripts, or genealogical studies on individual families. Biographies of individuals were included only if they contained significant information about the counties or towns.

Indexes to more important articles are maintained in the Illinois Historical Survey at the University of Illinois and at the Illinois State Historical Library in Springfield. Quincy Public Library has a special section called the Illinois Room which contains materials on Quincy and Adams County. Quincy College Library and the manuscripts library of the Historical Society of Quincy and Adams County Museum also house items useful in the study of the county. The Special Collections unit of the Western Illinois University Library also has Adams County materials, the most important of which are photographs and local government records housed in the IRAD Center.

This bibliography was compiled by Betty Albsmeyer, reference librarian at the Quincy Public Library, and edited by Gordana Rezab, special collections librarian at the WIU library.

Because of the limited distribution of locally produced publications, bibliographic coverage of items included in this list is often incomplete. Therefore, all additions and corrections will be welcome. Please address correspondence to: Gordana Rezab, Editor of WIRS Notes and Documents, Western Illinois University Library, Macomb, IL 61455.

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# BOOK REVIEWS

IOWA PLACE NAMES OF INDIAN ORIGIN. By Virgil J. Vogel. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1983.

Place names, like artifacts, connect us to the past. On the American landscape, change is a way of life, and memory of other times, other people, is frequently obliterated. But names have a way of enduring. In this book, Virgil J. Vogel treats over two hundred Iowa place names of real or fancied Indian origin, including not only topographic and political appellations but even parks, post offices and railway junctions. While many of the names in this book are still in current use, Vogel includes as well names given to villages, post offices and other entities which have long since vanished.

What to classify as an "Indian" place name is problematical, since many of Iowa's names originate with tribes who still reside there or were present during the period of White settlement — these include the Sacs, Fox, Iowas and Otoes — while still others, though genuine aboriginal names, were actually brought by White settlers from the East. The Fox — or *Mesquakie*, as the tribal remmants in Tama county call themselves — contributed, for example, *Amaqua, Appanoose, Chicaqua, Makawhee, Maquoketa, Mesquakie, Ottumwa, Poweshiek, Pymosa, Quasqueton, Tama, Wapello, Wapsipinicon.* (Still other Fox contributions are English translations from the Fox language: *Beaver Creak* is from the Fox word *ame'kwa*, "beaver," while *Turkey River* is a translation of Sac/Fox *panekai seepi*). But *Allaway Creek* is named for a Delaware chief in New Jersey, and both *Chatauqua* and *Geneseo*, imported from New York State, were derived from Senecan words.

The list of names imported from the East is in fact quite long, and a consideration of their sources says much about White settlement demography. Iowa has *Chillicothe* (Ohio), *Juniata* (Pennsylvania), *Kanawha* (West Virginia), *Kennebec* (Maine), *Lehigh* (Pennsylvania), *Nahant* (Massachusetts), *Nashua* (New Hampshire — from several Algonquian words, *Naishe, Massawi* and others, all of which mean "midway, between"), *Niagara* (New York — given in Iowa to a cave with a sixty-foot waterfall), *Norwalk* (Connecticut, anglicized from one of several Indian

words meaning "point of land"), *Ohio, Ontario, Orono* (Maine), *Shenandoah, Ticonic* (New York, New England and Pennsylvania) and *Toronto*. Of particular interest on this list are *What Cheer* and *Yankee*. *What Cheer*, an English greeting documented as early as the fourteenth century, was adopted by the Narragansett Indians and used by them to greet Roger Williams on his arrival in New England; it was given to the Iowa town by a Rhode Island Civil War veteran. *Yankee*, of obvious New England origin, is claimed by some scholars to have Indian origins, while others ascribe it to the White settlement history in Iowa. All of these names are from the northeastern or Middle Atlantic states except those of Ohio, itself settled largely by Pennsylvanians, or Canada, which absorbed a high number of New England Tories. Of particular interest is the predominance of New York or New England names. As I have elsewhere noted about Illinois, "Yankee" place names appear in numbers well out of proportion to the number of settlers from this area, signaling the Northeasterners' economic dominance in the towns of the early midwestern frontier.

Still other "Indian" names have less to do with Iowa's history than with White America's romance of an aboriginal past. Both *Hiawatha* and *Nokomis* commemorate the popularity of Longfellow's 1855 poem, as does the creek named *Minnehaha*. *Osceola* was a Seminole chief who fought against his tribe's removal from Florida, and *Apache* recalls the fierce southwestern tribe. The preoccupation, moreover, goes even beyond the commemoration of historic or literary Indian heroes. *Monona* was originally the name of an evil male character in an 1821 play by Lewis Deffenbach, but popular legend has confused the name with *Winona*, a legendary Indian girl who slew herself in grief over her lover. *Osage* does not come from the plains tribe with that name, but rather from Orrin Sage of Massachusetts, a banker whose representative filed the town's first plat.

One of the stickiest problems Vogel faces is in the mistaken "folk etymologies" of place names, a problem to which names of aboriginal origin are especially susceptible. Early European settlers and mapmakers had no systematic method for recording Indian words, leading to frequent misspellings and simplifications. Thus *Raccoon,* the name of an Iowa river, has two possible Virginia Algonquian sources with affixes, *arrathcune* and *arathkone*. Frequently this leads to Europeanized meanings and false origins, so that *Norwalk*, whose source we have already seen, was thought by Americans to come from "North-walk." An even more interesting crux is the name *Des Moines*, now the state capital and also a major river. Vogel believes the French named this river for the now-vanishing Moingwena tribe. Marquette ascended the river in the seventeenth century and found a tribe recorded as "Moingena" (sic). A gradual evolution appears over the next century and a half: *R. des Maingoana*, 1684; *le Moingona R.*, 1718; *La Riviere des Moins* or *Moingona*, 1721; *Riviere du Moine*, 1778; *River de Moin,* 1806 *des Moin*, 1816. (In 1815 it even appeared *Le Moin,* which, since the Des Moines River was mistakenly placed in Illinois on the 1684 map,

and since the Moingwenas were later moved to Illinois, suggests a possible origin for the name of western Illinois' *La Moine River).* Since then, putative origins of the name have come from efforts to translate the apparent Standard French, hence "River of Monks," "River of Means," "River of Mines," "the Lesser," "the Middle" and others.

This last example illustrates the depth of Vogel's scholarship and explains why this book has been almost thirty years in the making. He has consulted every map and early document available; he has examined the vocabularies of every relevant Indian language; he has written the locations all over Iowa and interviewed several residents (including Tama Mesquakie Chief Edward Davenport, a descendant of the founder of the city with that name) as well as consulting dozens of books and articles. His book — like his companion piece on Indian place names in Illinois — stands as a model for names scholars, although few can hope to equal his achievement.

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PRAIRIE OF PROMISE: SPRINGFIELD AND SANGAMON COUNTY. By Edward J. Russo. Windsor Hills, California: Windsor Publications, 1983. Pp. 111. $19.95.

Prefaced only with acknowledgements, one must induce from the text that this history of Springfield and Sangamon County is intended largely as a synthesis of the voluminous literature about those places to characterize, rather than analyze, their past periods. Chapter one, entitled, "The Garden Spot," is opened with a statement of the underlying agricultural potential which attracted settlement of the area until the end of its pioneer era in 1849 and proceeds to a recitation of famous pioneer names in a narrative of their deeds. And so it continues through five more chapters, characterization then facts: industrialization, 1850-1889; wealth, vice, and reform, 1890-1911; civic pride and material progress, 1912-1929; depression and world war, 1930-1945; and recent change, 1946-present. Many contemporary photographs of the city, of a few historical posters and of a few drawings comprise the section of twenty-four color illustrations which follow. Karen Graff's brief restatement of Springfield's economic development introduces the last chapter, a sketch of each of the book's eleven primary patrons. A bibliography ends the book.

Russo is well-qualified to write this book by education in history, authorship of historical feature articles for *Illinois Times*, and directorship of the Springfield public library's local history collection. The book's pluses and minuses derive mostly from its author's intimacy with his locale's historical literature.

The large body of Springfield and Sangamon County historical writing

beginning in the nineteenth century provides an extensive factual base to which principally the Sangamon County Historical Society has recently added good monographs (the Bicentennial series). Russo's effort extends the tradition of readable, honest, and balanced accounts. For example, turn-of-the-century Springfield is properly noted for its reputation statewide as politically corrupt and nationally as the scene of the 1908 race riot. Such candor is commonly lacking in community-sponsored community histories. Nor does Lincoln swell to mythic proportions in the seven references which portray him instead as a local notable.

Indeed, Russo is best in rare reinterpretations of the literature. Six biographical vignettes introduce generally unknown local figures. For example, Colonel John Williams is "a metaphor for Sangamon County's progress from a wilderness settlement to a wealthy agricultural and industrial area" (p. 25). And, the keen eye of Russo's architectural history specialty is aimed in scattered judgments of Springfield's often poor landscape aesthetics, a theme generally absent from even the best community histories. "Springfield was scarcely a town which could be described as beautiful" at its beginning, for example (p. 21).

These virtues outweight the general failure to relate the city and county to larger trends, a generic deficiency of community history. Perhaps the meager mention of other towns in the county can be justified by its urbanization, best exemplified in Springfield, but other themes rely too heavily on the myopic local literature. Although the county's national rank as a coal producer by World War I is appreciated, Springfield's niche in the national network of urban industrial specialties developing after the Civil War is not delineated. Springfield's "levee" is also not appreciated as an archetypal American red-light district at the turn-of-the-century. Without reference to the "levee" partly as a symptom of urbanization, the reader is left to infer the "levee's" cause as the original sin against which many Springfield reformers claimed to crusade at the time. The ethical concern underlying this treatment of the "levee" probably reflects the influence of the quality-of-life question inspiring several of the best recent studies on which Russo relied. Lastly, ethnicity has merely anecdotal value in this narrative. An entire paragraph is alloted to the 300 Portuguese settlers in mid-nineteenth century Springfield, while the Irish, German, Italian, Russian, and Lithuanian immigrants to the city are left to scattered references incommensurate with their far greater numbers and influence. Springfield's ethnicity, however, is a subject for which the early oral history program at Sangamon State University offers the only significant remedy; but its primary sources have yet to be researched for the publications convenient to Russo's synthesis.

*Prairie of Promise* nonetheless deserves the attention of anyone interested in the history of Springfield and Sangamon County.

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EDGAR LEE MASTERS. By John H. Wrenn and Margaret M. Wrenn. Twayne's United States Authors Series, No. 456. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1983. Pp. vii, 144.

The Twayne United States Authors Series has finally got around to Edgar Lee Masters, now fixed as number 456 in the TUSAS's rather inclusive canon. It is not hard to figure out why Masters had to wait in line behind 455 other authors before he got his moment in the Twayne sun. Surely few American writers are less appealing as a subject of a critical book than he. What is to be done with a writer who wrote one satisfying book of poetry and then followed it up with two dozen collections of largely wretched verse, seven clumsy and unreadable novels, five careless and inaccurate biographies, and masses of other miscellaneous matter? And not even *Spoon River Anthology* is unequivocally inviting to a critic. A cranky, eccentric production, it was flung up by the tides of literary history for a moment and then flung into the backwaters again to live on in a murky world between art and popular culture, aging on the poetry shelves of a thousand chain book outlets between the collected poems of Carl Sandburg and *Best-Loved Poems of the American People.*

The Wrenns, father and daughter, do their best to make a unified book out of this radically disunified career. Of their ten chapters, they devote four mainly to biography, two to *Spoon River Anthology*, and one each to the rest of the poetry, the novels, the biographies, and the autobiographical *Across Spoon River*. The shape of the book thus wisely does not reflect that actual shape of Masters' career but rather emphasizes what now, in retrospect, seems most valuable and minimizes the rest. The result is a book that does at least part of what the Twayne books are supposed to do: provide an elementary introduction to an author and his works. We are given a sketch of his life, a complete list of his works, and brief summaries and commentaries on the most important of them.

The Wrenns do not succeed so well in providing the introductory student with a consistent critical view of Masters. In one of the best sections of the book, they quote Masters' call for a "real critic" of his work and comment perceptively that such a real critic of a given author is "one who can, where others cannot, discern the true merit of that artist's best work." Throughout the book, the Wrenns seem to be shopping around for some way of getting at the "true merit" of Masters' best work, but they never find it. They begin by emphasizing Masters' mysticism, even quoting Masters' horoscope, as cast by "a professional astrologer of Boulder, Colorado." Elsewhere, they offer some sketchy psychological speculations about Masters, some observations on Masters' relation to the "macrocosm" of intellectual history, and some comments on Masters as a Midwestern writer. But none of these lines of thought is carried through, and in a rather lame conclusion,

the Wrenns merely locate Masters conventionally in the "revolt from the village" tradition and identify his message as being "that we must love the land, man's only home, and that, in the words of another poet, we must love one another or die."

This critical indecisiveness also damages badly the Wrenns' reading of *Spoon River Anthology*, a serious weakness in a book that emphasizes this one work so heavily. They find in the *Anthology* what they refer to as Masters' "three R's," romanticism, realism and reformism, trace the themes of sex, social repression, and fate through the book, and come to the unstartling conclusion that "freedom is the central theme of *Spoon River Anthology*, and sex as its central metaphor."

The *Anthology* is not a complex book, but it is considerably more complex than the Wrenns seem to realize. A critical approach somewhat more rigorous than their narrowly thematic one might have revealed more of the book's inner tensions and conflicts. It might have led them, for example, to revise their hasty misreading of the important final "Webster Ford" epitaph, which they see only as a celebration of the "Delphic Apollo" who has guided Masters, missing entirely the poem's note of terrible self-judgment and yearning for death, as Apollo's laurel leaves become the leaves of the *Anthology* itself, found "too sere for coronal wreaths, and fit alone/For urns of memory."

The Wrenns are as reductive in their treatment of Masters as they are of his work, calling him "a proponent of traditional Jeffersonian values, strictly heterosexual relationships, and Christian love, all based in a fundamental individualism which includes a belief in personal immortality and a salvation determined by one's conduct in this life." One might quarrel with several items in this summary, but even more troublesome is what it leaves out, including Masters' approval of Negro slavery, his hatred of immigrants, and his complex misogyny. Masters had fixed, passionately held notions of American history and politics, and a close examination of what he understood to be "traditional Jeffersonian values" might have been more valuable as intellectual background than the brief survey of Darwin, Mill, Tennyson, and other such comparatively remote figures that the Wrenns offer s the intellectual "macrocosm."

The thinnes of the Wrenns' critical and biographical treatment of Masters may be partially the result of their neglect of recent scholarship. Their list of secondary sources is innocent of any work on Masters from the past ten years except for Hardin Masters' reminiscence of his father and an article on Tennessee Mitchell by the Wrenns themselves. Hilary Masters' important *Last Stands* makes it into a footnote but not into the bibliography; otherwise the notes are as dated as the bibliography. This flaw may be more the fault of the publishers than of the authors; Twayne is notoriously slow in getting its manuscripts out. But it seriously limits the usefulness fo the book.

One cannot fault the Wrenns for writing an introduction to Masters rather than the more ambitious critical work that is still needed. Their book is useful, as far as it goes, and will perhaps help others to go further.

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A TRIBUTE TO DANIEL SMYTHE. Ed. Dennis Q. McInerny. Peoria: Bradley University, 1983.

Of the many reasons books get published, probably the least common is that the author has something compelling to say. Axiomatic in the world of paperback novels, this is also, alas, true in scholarship.

Dr. Johnson, of course, maintained that only a blockhead wrote for any purpose other than to make money, whatever ideas were or were not fighting their way out of his head; however, unless we count increasingly negligible raises or the dubious privilege of being allowed to continue as field hands in the cotton fields of composition, English professors do not normally write for money any more than they write for ideas. Mostly they write from habit, from respect for the Word, and with an eye toward their list of publications—a little something for the PMLA bibliography and the vita—a modest monument against the winds of time, lest it be said at their retirement dinner, "The world will little note, nor long remember."

Let us be honest about it: like most of our actions, books spring from a mixture of motivations: money, habit, ideas, vanity. . . sometimes, even, the impulse to elbow an old enemy, memorialize an old friend. The book at hand is, to some extend, just such a book, "a collection of critical essays and reminiscences written about and in honor of Daniel Smythe, poet and teacher" by alumni and members of the English department at Bradley Polytechnical Institute, where Smythe taught as poet-in-residence from 1955 to 1973.

It need not be said that Smythe was not a Big Name poet of the twentieth century. He was essentially a formalist writing in an age which preferred content–a polite poet, a Poetry Society poet, perhaps even a parlor poet writing in rambunctious times. The selective bibliography prepared for this volume by librarian Charles Frey lists perhaps two dozen poems first published in places like *Poetry, Harper's, Scribner's* and *the New Yorker;* most of these appeared in the middle 1930s. The bulk of Smythe's work, especially his later work, appeared first in places like *Nature Magazine,*

*Scientific Monthly* and the *Saturday Evening Post*, then in volumes published in Golden Quill Press.

In his worthy and up-front introduction to this book, Dennis McInerny makes precisely this point, argues the case (and it is an American Studies argument, not an English Department argument) for paying at least some critical attention to "poets who give a lifetime of loyalty to (their craft), who produce a substantial body of work which, besides its intrinsic merits, reflects important aspects of the development of American culture and which is very much part of the large phenomenon which, in any time period, we designate as 'American poetry'." One of the more interesting features of this book is the various ways each writer comes to grips with the fact that Smythe was, and will probably always remain, a silver or even a copper poet, a displaced New Englander who lived in Peoria without ever coming to terms with the Midwest as a literary or geographic landscape.

Whether the critical pieces herein contained make *in fact* the case argued *in principle* by McInerny's introduction, I am not sure; they are certainly more successful in what they attempt than the reminiscences, the "pieces which would serve to accentuate Daniel Smythe's personal qualities." These last are at best trivia, which in the case of Ginsberg or Berryman might prove interesting, if insignificant, but in Smythe's case come off (like so much from the small press world) as bad parodies of literary gossip. At their worst, these pieces degenerate into abstract and pious cliches ("he cared about [students] as writers and, more importantly, as people"; "one of those very special professors who gave more of himself back to you in his critiques of your papers than you had put into the original productions") which demonstrate that either Smythe was a very bad teacher of writing or his students learned less from him than they imagined.

The critical essays are mixed. Some are more about Frost (Smythe's mentor) or Pope than about Smythe. Some make such weak arguments as to condemn with faint praise, and others are more or less explicitly critical: "Dan's inability to penetrate the Frostian mask had a deleterious effect on Dr. Smythe, the man and the poet . . . . A comparison between Smythe's 'The Side Road' and Frost's 'The Road Not Taken' might be instructive"; "it shows on his part an independence of mind usually unlooked for." Is this a vestige of what Ed Chapman mentions in his essay as "cruelty and ridicule" which had taught Smythe "wariness"? (A second interesting feature of this book is the portrait it paints, consciously or unconsciously, of the meanness with which academia hosts living creative writers.)

Or were the critics themselves unconvinced? Paul Sawyer admits at the outset of his close reading of five Smythe poems that he embarked upon the project with doubt and reservations as to Dan's worth as a poet. The poems Sawyer discusses, and some others he chose not to explicate, convinced him that Smythe was "a poet and a good one," and Sawyer's explications convince a reader of the same thing. McInerny's own critical essay–a close look at *Only More Sure* (1946), Smythe's second volume and, as I recall

from my own perusal of Smythe's work when selecting poems for *Beowulf to Beatles* (1972), his best book, the book in which he came closest to discovering a compelling subject and his own voice–implies a complexity to Smythe's work that commends it to our attention, although a more generous quotation of actual poems would have strengthened the argument. Both McInerny's and Sawyer's pieces are tributes, as the book's title implies.

By far the most ambitious essay in the collection is Ed Chapman's 29-page "Dan Smythe and the New England Poetic Tradition." It is the full scholarly treatment, and despite tendencies toward excessive equivocation ("in my view," "it seems to me"), self-congratulation, and parody, it is in the last analysis enlightening, entertaining, carefully documented and well written. It may even be a critique of Smythe's work that gives back more than was there in the original productions.

The conspicuous absence from this volume of two of Dan's former colleagues is puzzling, especially since two of those who *did* contribute arrived at the university after Smythe's teaching days were over and never really knew the man. George Chambers, of course, has an enormous international reputation (he is, nevertheless, still a creative writer hosted by academia) and Jim Ballowe's name still commands an audience, especially in Illinois. Both are on record in McInerny's preface as having "contributed much" to the making of the book; Ballowe, full professor-turned-associate provost, is credited with having arranged financial backing. Words would have been more appreciated, however, from one or both, and would have lent more credibility and stature to the project. Perhaps they were otherwise occupied, but I can't help being reminded of a Phil Ochs line, "I'll send all the money you ask for, but don't ask me to come on along, so love me, I'm a liberal."

As it stands, the book leaves us with the same ambivalencies with which we came to it. As an artifact the book *is* a tribute, but the case for Dan Smythe as "a poet and a good one" has not been made fully.

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# CONTRIBUTORS

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GEORGE MONTEIRO, Professor of English at Brown University, is the author of *Henry James and John Hay: The Record of a Friendship* (1965), as well as various articles on Hay. He is co-editor of *The John Hay-Howells Letters* (1980) and editor of *John Hay's Pike County* (1984).

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